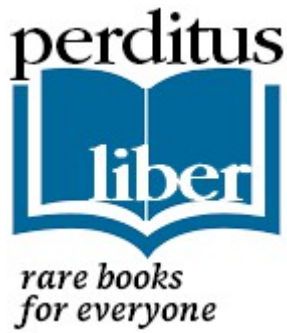


HALF-GODS





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Half-Gods
By
Murray Sheehan

Published 1927

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BY
MURRAY SHEEHAN



NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

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Printed in the United States of America

TO
ROBERTA OF BELMONT
and
MARGARET OF INNISFRAE

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THERE was consternation among the Durnans. During the night Belle, the bay mare, had become a mother; but instead of giving birth to a reputable black mule colt, as she had done the previous year, and as she was fully expected to do again this year, she now stood in the lower pasture with a monstrous thing beside her, having the body of a horse and, superimposed upon that, the white torso of an indisputably human baby, whose infant head gave forth sounds unmistakable in their import.

Mrs. Durnan it was who discovered the new arrival. She had gone down about dawn to bring up the cows for milking, and had been startled to hear, coming from a clump of trees near the spring, the cry of a hungry baby. At first she had thought her ears misled her, and then her imagination had leapt to some offspring deserted by the berry-pickers she had seen last night out on the road. The sound was real enough, however, and so, procuring a stout stick, she went towards the little grove which shaded the water-hole.

Belle, the mare, staggered to her feet, and now it was that Mrs. Durnan gained her first sight of the

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prodigy, which, as she afterwards many times remarked, gave her a start something awful. She was not accustomed to see a new-born infant raise itself from the ground, with more strength of neck and backbone than any of her own twelve children had ever manifested so early. When the rubicund infant continued to rear its

height, and mounted soaring into the air, or so it seemed, since its dark-colored horse's body was not at first clearly discernible in the early morning light, Mrs. Durnan gave a cry and fled precipitously towards the house, forgetful of cows and milking, eager only to get away from this horrible vision of a murdered baby, as she was sure, which floated in the air.

Mrs. Durnan's lord and conjugal partner was still prone when she entered the house, and displayed signs of irritation at his wife's rousing him. Still largely inarticulate, she gasped out so wild a tale to his ears that he thought at first that he was dreaming, or, as he expressed it, the old woman was took with a spell. Then rolling from his couch, he drew on his trousers and his shoes, and stood full arrayed for the day's work, having as usual spent the night in his shirt, as twice entailing less labor, in the preparation for sleep at even-fall, and the making ready for work by day.

"She's down there by the water-hole, Jo. My God, what a scare I got! I'm all of a tremble. Don't you go near the thing. Find out what it is. Oh, why did this thing have to come to us! Is the boys up?"

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Mrs. Durnan was rocking lustily in an old cane-bottomed chair, with her apron to her face, her eyes fixed in a far corner of the room. Mr. Durnan had still vouchsafed no word of question or answer to the torrent of speech his wife poured out, intent as he was on his morning's series of yawns, cavernous and resounding. He routed out the boys, and departed in silence down the slope, crossing the stable yard and the railroad track which separated the house from the lower pasture.

The morning was full upon the land by this time, and as he neared the group of willows he saw the browsing form of Belle, and beside her, her offspring. The colt was suckling, and it seemed to Mr. Durnan at first to be the ordinary gangling sort of figure he had been accustomed to see each year, except that its head was strangely long and white. Then the colt heard him coming, and turned from its mother's side to look at him.

"What the hell!" ejaculated Mr. Durnan, stopping in his tracks. Old Belle raised her head and looked at him, and then sniffed at her offspring, and fell to cropping the grass once more. However perturbed the man might be, there was for her nothing untoward in the episode. She was accustomed to variety, having dammed many colts of different colors, in her day, not to mention young mules with long black ears. To her this vagary of her body's production seemed no more strange than any other.

Mr. Durnan scratched his head above his left ear,

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and stood in blank amazement, while the infant newcomer waited on unsteady legs, and then moved to the further side of that natural bulwark, its mother. Even to the insensitive eyes of Mr. Durnan, there was something wildly wrong here, aside from the mere incongruity of the misshapen creature. For this infant body perched atop of the colt's torso was no wobbling puny thing such as periodically had been introduced into his own household. Here were no unperceiving eyes and weak impotent hands such as all the young Durnans had possessed at birth. The new-born infant of Belle's bestowing sat straight and erect, with a short stout neck, head firm on its shoulders, and with its stubby hands on

thick well-formed arms it rubbed its nose or laid hold of its mother's mane as it willed, gazing meanwhile on the world about it, Mr. Durnan included, with a thoroughly conscious, not to say slightly malignant, look in its eyes.

And now arrived the younger Durnans and their mother, from the house, ranging from Ben, eighteen, down to the baby, still in Mrs. Durnan's arms. At sight of the little figures, more nearly akin to its own age, the colt laughed aloud with a laugh curiously mature and yet infantile, and ran out on awkward legs towards the youngsters in front of its mother, and there halted. Mrs. Durnan hastily grabbed three or four of the youngest children and got them behind her, and cried out to mind, be careful.

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Old Belle also raised her head and then came between her offspring and the family, and stood on guard, prepared for she knew not what trouble. The youngsters gazed with frank delight on the new arrival, and were not much surprised. The world was still so full of wonders to them that they were prepared for anything. This was no more wonderful than the telephone at the cross-roads store, or the man who built the brick chimney in the new house across the road.

"He's got a good chest on him, all right, Pop," remarked Ben Durnan, over the heads of the younger children. "Look how broad he is between the legs there."

"Yeh," nodded Mr. Durnan. "And his legs is shaped good, too."

"Wonder what the top part of him would weigh?" suggested Mrs. Durnan, to Jimurine, her eldest daughter. "Bigger'n any baby I ever seen before in all my born days."

“And look, Ma, at the funny sort of hair that runs right down the middle of his back. Ain’t that funny!” called one of the smaller Durnans.

“Too bad,” said Mr. Durnan at length, shaking his head. “Looks as though he might a been a good daughter.” For him the thing was no longer a wonder, but a fact. “Go up and git my gun, Ray,” he commanded the third of his sons.

“You ain’t goin’ to kill it, Jo?” demanded Mrs. Durnan, swaying with the infant on her hip. All

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the children hung silent, waiting for their father’s reply.

“Well I ain’t a-goin’ to keep it, that’s sure,” replied the man. “I ain’t a-goin’ to have all the neighbors floekin’ in here and pointin’ a finger at me and mine, and the sooner we get it over with, the better. Go on and fetch me that there rifle, Ray.”

“Jo, it ain’t right,” reiterated Mrs. Durnan. “It ain’t right to shoot it. You hadn’t ought to do it, it ain’t right.”

“What do you mean it ain’t right?” demanded her husband.

“Why, the thing’s . . . the thing’s human!” broke out Mrs. Durnan, “and the Lord’ll punish you if you take its life, that’s what. I ain’t sure but the Law’ll be down on you. You just wait now, afore you go about killin’ that there creature. You better ask the preacher. It’d be murder, that’s what it’d be.”

For reply, Mr. Durnan spat in silence as he walked about without speaking, and looked at the colt with that air of wishing to appear thoughtful which, with more or less success, all men can don. But he deigned no word of acquiescence to his life’s companion. “I never did see

nothin' like that, afore," he said to Ben, instead. And once again, solemnly he spat.

Then came the first step in their shameful disclosure. For the early freight was approaching from town, and must pass within fifty feet of where

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stood their monstrosity, naked to the gaze of the world. The heavy sound of the wheels as they ground on the curve by the Mill woke the family to their approaching doom, although, be it said, the younger members of the group knew something not altogether alien to pride in this wonderful new possession in their midst. They felt a sort of reflected glory.

On came the rocking engine on its uneven track, followed by its train of cars, and Mr. Durnan made an abortive movement as though he would marshall the family to form a screen to hide the animal. Then he realized how hard a thing this would be to secrete and he grew angry instead. "Don't all stand round lookin' at him," he remonstrated. "Ain't you got no sense? Maybe they won't notice it." And so when the train passed by, most of the Durnans might have been seen standing, at gaze upon the locomotive, with their backs turned toward Belle and her colt, as though they were simply waiting out there in the pasture for fun in the early summer's morning, although one or two of the younger members stood sideways, looking now at the colt and now at the fireman, to see if he saw it, and to see what the colt did when the train thundered by.

"What the hell!" sang out the fireman from his window to the engineer on the further side of the cab. And the assembled Durnans saw the two men thru and

look in their direction and then laugh. A man in blue overalls, walking along the tops of the box

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cars, started to wave to the group, and then stopped his movement as he caught sight of the queer thing beyond them. He motioned to a man in the top of the caboose, pointing in their direction, and as the end of the train came opposite to them, this man too stared and shifted his position and waved no greeting to the assembled family.

The Durnans now felt themselves spurned by all men. "Lead her down lower in the pasture, Guy, and close the gate after you, too," commanded the father grimly, before going up to the breakfast of fried potatoes and sow belly, coffee, bread and sorghum, in which all from youngest to eldest participated. The whole family knew what was meant by the dictate. Their shame must be hidden away.

• • • • •

In the course of the morning, Lucy and Guy and Carry and Bill, the four youngest Durnan children who could walk, wandered down the road to play with the "new" family's children in the heavy red clay which served for lawn to the recently erected house. They were big with the news of their recent experience, and gave full details to the Kellogg children. "When the latter suggested a visit to the prodigy, the Durnan youngsters at first demurred, since Pa had threatened to whop any of them who breathed a breath about the family shame. But then, planning a devious route which would lead

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them by crooked and inconspicuous ways to the marvel, the Kellogg children called upon their mother for permission to go over to play with the Durnan children.

“What for you want to go over there and play for? Huhn? Ain’t you got a good enough place to play here? No sir, you’re goin’ to stay right here. You ain’t agoin’ to leave this here yard. You hear me?” Thus Mrs. Kellogg, arrayed in a simple single garment of blue, not vulgarly new nor conspicuously clean. On her head was drawn a knitted cap, so much simpler of application than the longer and more complicated morning process of a brush and comb.

The children stood in respectful silence for a moment, open-mouthed.

“We got a new baby over at our house,” volunteered Bill Durnan, aged eight, as excuse for deserting the Kellogg demesne.

“‘T ain’t so,” replied Mrs. Kellogg promptly, for she had been talking with Mrs. Durnan only yesterday. Then sprang into her mind an ugly suspicion, recently entertained, concerning the mill hands and the lax morals of the cross-roads store down at the corner. “Who’s got it? Your Jim?”

Bill shook his head, no, it wasn’t Jim. But his lips were locked, and he and all the young Durnans looked at one another and into the distance. No single word more could Mrs. Kellogg get from them, although she seated herself on the top step and neglected her house work in the attempt. This

latter privation, be it mentioned in passing, was a hardship easily borne by the lady. Evidently she would

be forced to visit the Durnan headquarters for information.

By way of the store she went, accordingly. Which is, on a lesser scale, as though one said she went from Chicago to New Orleans by way of New York. For first she proceeded eastwards, entering a store by the back door, to which there was a short cut from her own backyard. Only after she had conversed there, did she turn southwest and cross the road to enter into the front yard of the Durnan's home by way of the slattern gate which hung ever transversely, slightly ajar.

In the store was the abnormally fat daughter of the owner, who, even in her fifteen years of immaturity, by reason of her weight seemed to take on a more matronly air of knowingness than is usual in girls of her age. So it was that Mrs. Kellogg did not hesitate to mention the unmentionable as the girl was cutting off the dime's worth of sausage.

"I suppose you heard, Mabel,... make it fifteen cents' worth... they got a new baby over at the Durnans?" queried Mrs. Kellogg, in hope more of gaining than of imparting information.

"Do tell!" replied the girl, bending her gaze upwards on the dial of the scales. "You don't mean Mrs. Durnan! She was in here not more 'n five minutes ago, I do declare."

Mrs. Kellogg compressed her lips and shook her

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head, and said nothing, and sighed, letting Mabel draw her own conclusions.

"Didn't she say nothin' to you about it?" she asked, picking, up the sausage.

“Never a word,” answered Mabel. “I noticed her eyes was kind o’ red, and she seemed nervous like. She bought a bag of salt.”

“Salt!” repeated Mrs. Kellogg, as though that fact were perhaps significant.

“Salt,” repeated Mabel, nodding her head, not knowing but that the fact was perhaps full of meaning which to her maiden mind was dark. Here was another clue to be followed up in the wonderful secret store of knowledge which she and Gertie Miller down the road a piece were garnering and treasuring in surreptitious moments.

Straight to the home of the Durnans Mrs. Kellogg hied her. On the porch, peeling potatoes, sat Mrs. Durnan, and beside her was Jimurine.

“Howdy,” spoke Mrs. Kellogg, glancing sharply at the girl, and noting her good color.

“Howdy,” replied Mrs. Durnan. Jim was listless.

Mrs. Kellogg always walked with her arms folded, as though she were holding a secret fast to her bosom... a thing which, by the way, she never did. “With Mrs. Kellogg, a good bit of news was to be preferred above great riches, and that day in which she might gain and spread a choice morsel was to be marked in her calendar with a white stone. Her chief forms of converse were “I suppose you

know...” or “Did you see...” or “Have you heard...” or “They tell me...” and could her imagination have so far carried her afield, she would most have wished to be a telephone operator, sitting spider-like at the centre of her outstretched wires. She never could decide whether in the world of gossip it was more blessed to give or to

receive. It was good to be of the acquaintance of Mrs. Kellogg, for thus one learned much, albeit the pleasure was but bitter-sweet, since one knew always that she would do also unto you as she now was doing unto others.

So it was that Mrs. Durnan moved uneasily in her chair and groaned in spirit, feeling that already the hour of the family secret was at an end. But, as she told herself even in greeting her visitor, she “would do her durndest to keep it dark.” Mrs. Durnan, in the process of bearing and rearing twelve offspring, had never had much time for the development of a news sense. There was always so much news within the precincts of her own home, in the way of cuts, bruises, clothes, and meals, not to mention a husband to be satisfied, and a God to be appeased, that except for church and the store, and rare invasion of the town in quest of a new pair of shoes, Mrs. Durnan had never wandered wide from home, nor had she been able long at a time to lend an ear from the crying of babies or the boiling over of kettles to listen to tales of neighborly shortcomings. The wrinkles of worry were never long absent

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from her forehead, and her hair sparse and tightly bushed back to the knob at the rear bespoke a woman not free for fripperies of any kind, least of all the luxury of a morning devoted to mere talk. She cast one glance at Mrs. Kellogg’s head, avoided her eyes, and then went on revolving potatoes against an efficient knife blade.

“I just thought I’d come over to see how everybody was,” announced Mrs. Kellogg smoothly, sitting down on a step uninvited, with arms still folded against her.

“Everybody’s all right, I reckon,” replied Mrs. Durnan tersely. “Here, Jim, you go in and move that there stew off’n the fire. Put it in back, now.”

Mrs. Kellogg cast an appraising glance at the girl as she rose and entered the door. Quickly her gaze ran over Mrs. Durnan as well.

“How’s Sally gettin’ on?” she demanded immediately, as though she were in on the secret. Sally was the second daughter of the family, aged fifteen. Mrs. Kellogg slid a tone of understanding sympathy into her voice as she spoke, one of those low confidential intonations which can lead rapidly into an exchange of personal details.

“Why, Sally’s gettin’ on real fine,” replied Mrs. Durnan in lack-lustre voice, stooping to recapture a runaway tuber.

“And... ?” continued Mrs. Kellogg, interrogating with her voice, her eyes, her eyebrows, her posture,

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her whole body, wishing Mrs. Durnan to go on with the tale.

“And what?” said Mrs. Durnan, raising her eyes to the woman’s face.

Mrs. Kellogg was not to be balked. Like a mother creature brought to bay in defence of her young, this woman could, when driven to it, dart out directly at her object, if a bearer of tidings proved recalcitrant. So now she lunged.

“I heared you-all had a baby over here, and I just thought I’d come over to ask about it.”

Mrs. Durnan snorted, and nearly dropped the pan of potatoes from her lap. “Well, we ain’t. It’s a lie!” she said immediately. “We ain’t got no baby over here, and you know it.”

And like the voice of Nemesis, there answering rang out in the field below the house, across the railroad track, the unmistakable cry of a very tiny baby's voice. Mrs. Kellogg heard it, and the tilt of her head was arrested, listening. Mrs. Durnan heard it, and the blood ran cold within her. She too was suddenly frozen into rigidity. Only once did the cry sound forth. Then the ordinary sounds of the heated morning took up their regular course again, the gentle breeze sounded in the trees, the whine of the big saws in the Mill was audible. But Mrs. Kellogg nodded, and Mrs. Durnan felt herself frustrated.

"Oh, my God!" she sobbed, more to herself than to the other woman. Rising, she caught with her apron

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a salt tear coursing down her nose, and without another word she passed into the house.

"Well, I just thought I'd kind o' ask," said Mrs. Kellogg, rising, and disconnecting one arm from the other long enough to enter one finger of her right hand through the woven interstices of her head-covering and there to relieve some momentary irritation. "That's all I come over for." As she moved towards the gate she managed to swerve sufficiently from the direct path to look down towards the pasture across the railroad track. If she had had the time she would even have strolled down that way. But the eleven o'clock whistle had just sounded from the University over on the hill and she must be getting home to get the "old man's" dinner ready for him when he came at noon from the Mill. Before this she had several times risked being late in order to linger in the grocery store for just one more detail. But the last time there had been reprisals in the form of loud words and even blows, and so now she turned homewards. She

felt that she had enough to put two and two together, at any rate. Thriving on surmisals and waxing fat on suppositions as she did, Mrs. Kellogg was not the woman to feel that hers was a wasted morning. She hurried home to put on the meal quickly, so that she might before noon tell the Holcombs the news. What joy to make two bits of information grow where but one fact grew before!

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The Reverend Walter Holcomb, of the faith termed officially the Church of Holiness, but vulgarly known as the "Holy Rollers," with his wife and their son, was Mrs. Kellogg's nearest neighbor on the road to the rearward of her house, as the Durnans lived on the highway in front of her. From her kitchen door she could on a quiet evening hear what the Reverend gentleman and his wife were discussing on their front porch, providing, that is, they were so indiscreet as to sit there and talk.

Far from spiritual in his appearance, Reverend Holcomb, to give him the designation most common on the lips of his flock, looked most like a butcher who has long been inhaling the fumes of fresh-killed things. He looked raw and ferocious. From the low forehead and heavy black eyebrows, down through the firm white teeth and the iron jaw, down through the blacksmith arms of him and the hairy fists with which he pounded the pulpit and threatened his parishioners, down through his thick-thighed legs to his solid feet, he spelled beef, good, red beef.

His wife was a meek and colorless woman rather given to cowering. Good texts there are in the Bible to inculcate such an attitude towards a husband and the Reverend Mr. Holcomb was not the man to let them go

unused. St. Paul he liked, on the subject of wives. His son, Roger, however, was rather a more upstanding sort, a lad about seventeen years old, with his father's jet-black eyes and startling white teeth, and also his father's complement of sturdy

thighs, without however, any of the older man's restraining religiosity. He was coming to be known as one of the community's "bad boys."

Mrs. Kellogg was quite breathless with anticipation as she came round the side of the Holcomb house. The minister's voice was audible in the kitchen.

"Well, I don't care if you like it or not," he was saying in firm, manly tones to his wife. He turned when Mrs. Kellogg stepped up on the porch, and conversation ceased between them.

"I just thought I'd run over for a minute," said the newcomer hastily. "Had you heard that Sally Durnan has had a... well, she's in trouble." Mrs. Kellogg had begun bravely enough in her divulgement, but had ended in a concession to the cloth. The momentary raising of the eyebrows, and the nod that went with her last words were sufficient to drive home the full meaning she wished to convey.

Mr. Holcomb whirled from the doorway through which he was just passing, and confronted Mrs. Kellogg with a red face.

"Who told you so? Who said that?" he shouted at her.

"I got it straight all right," replied Mrs. Kellogg, with folded arms. "They're trying to keep it hid. They've got the poor girl cooped up down in the lower pasture, but I heard the baby cry with my own ears."

The minister sputtered something quick and

monosyllabic that sounded obscene, and left the two women to talk over the details. Then he came back.

“Did they say anything about who they thought it was?” he demanded.

Mrs. Kellogg shook her head slowly, while a look of musing review came into her eyes. She was beginning to wonder aloud if it could be so-and-so when Mr. Holcomb left the room once more.

He, too, was wondering, but not aloud. And the causes of his musing, which were rather complex, were these: first, he had known for some time that his boy, Roger, had been acting suspiciously in the neighborhood with, among others, this girl, Sally. Inasmuch as young people, in the enlightened estimation of the Reverend Mr. Holcomb, associate with but one end in view, the father strongly feared that in the present instance he had been made a grandfather. Second, he had two hundred dollars in the bank, with which he had rather thought, latterly, that he would make first payment in town on a Ford touring car. True it was, that he had long been fulminating from the pulpit against Fords, along with University professors, alien beliefs, whiskey, and other like sinful practices. But of late, as the weekly collections had been improving, ever since the strong revival services early in the spring, he had begun to see advantages to a minister of the Gospel who owned a rapid means of transportation. Especially, inasmuch as sometimes he did a little horse trading by way of side-line as aid to his stipend, and this

automobile Would furnish a much wider area of business. Third, if the Durnans really did descend upon his son and upon him for monetary recompense against the harm done to the family honor in the present instance, it would be better, he figured rapidly, that his bank balance be less swollen than at present.

So it was that, upon hearing the dire tidings from the Durnan home, the spiritual guide of the community went not straightway to the stricken house, but walked first to the corner grocery, where he applied himself to the telephone, and incontinently put in his order for immediate delivery of the Ford car, saying that he would take it if the man came out forthwith in the car and took him in to the bank to cash a check. Having thus acted, Mr. Holcomb still further procrastinated in his errand of condolence and spiritual chastisement, until after he had eaten his noonday meal and safely rid himself of all his funds in the First National Bank on the corner of the Square.

Thus fortified in spirit, the Reverend Mr. Holcomb, at two o'clock that afternoon left his front porch and prepared to descend upon the Durnan family, the very wrath of God embodied.

• • • • •

The Durnans had always, for divers reasons, been more or less of a thorn in the ample flesh of the Reverend Mr. Holcomb. There is something proper

and God-fearing in the bearing of children, he felt, but when the process was carried to what he esteemed to be the extreme, of having one child every year, and having a

total of twelve, there was something not just right, something indecent, something that courted for the community the smiting hand of the Almighty. True it was that one year the Durnan house did not have its annual quota of a new-born infant; but then, the next year Mrs. Durnan had presented her husband with twins, and so the average had, after all, been maintained. Then too, there was something disconcerting in the names that Mrs. Durnan had bestowed upon her children. They were all good ordinary designations, but, if taken in their regular succession, the names of the girls, from next-to-the-oldest down to the youngest, formed a sentence, Sally, May, Lucy, Carry, Joe, which seemed somehow a godless procedure, displaying an untoward levity in the serious matters of God's world. Mr. Holcomb even took umbrage over the fact that seven years had elapsed between the birth of the youngest boy, Bill, and that of the littlest girl, now just one year old. Veiled denunciations on that score had descended upon the guilty couple who, as he said, in their old age were thus giving themselves up to the lusts of the flesh. And this, despite the fact that neither of the Durnans was yet over forty, albeit no dweller in cities would have thought it possible, such ravages had toil and worry, bad food and worse sanitation wreaked upon them.

But most serious of all, thus far, had been the backsliding of the second son of the family, Daniel, in the eyes of the reverend gentleman. Daniel was sixteen, a wicked age; and he was quiet, which spelled devilment; and he liked to go off alone into the woods and hills, which meant hiding from the face of God and man; and Daniel never attended now the services of the Reverend

Walter Holcomb in the little white framed structure near the cross-roads store, but preferred to go into town every Sunday, to one of the big churches, because, as the boy said, he liked to hear the organ and the singing. Godless infidel! The rest of the family had fallen into line, had come to all the Sunday services, morning and evening, had attended assiduously the revival meetings and the ecstatic Sunday school preparation affairs, held periodically for a whole week at a time, every evening. To be sure, these were the only social affairs of the little community which were recognized as being legitimate, and thus they took on an added value in the eyes of his people, a value which might perhaps have startled the minister and the very members of the congregation themselves, could the real significance of the meetings to them have suddenly been revealed to their simple minds. Nevertheless, from all these affairs at the church Daniel Durnan held himself aloof. Now it was even bruited that he contemplated attending that godless University on the hill yonder, supported by the state and not by some church, as are the Baptist and Methodist

institutions in neighboring Arkansas. If young people felt that they must attend some place of so-called higher learning, let them then attend, at least, one of these church schools. As far as he was concerned, Mr. Holcomb thanked his God that he himself did not believe in education of any kind. If He, in His infinite wisdom, had meant for us to be educated, thundered Mr. Holcomb with irrefutable logic, He would have caused us to be born educated. And his congregation, sitting in their little white frame structure across from the fair grounds, nodded their heads and sighed Amen.

Nor was Mr. Holcomb the only one who did not approve or enter into the spirit of young Daniel. The boy's own family were utterly at a loss to comprehend the lad who was living in their midst; his school teachers had early been baffled by the ease with which he had learned the lessons they put before him, and by the strange sense of discontent and boredom he manifested towards these paltry matters. He never had shown the proper respect for those things which should be respected. He seemed to bear within him, even as a youngster, a standard of values alien to that of the people about him, so that he neglected that which they esteemed, and cherished odd things which to them seemed negligible. Mrs. Kellogg's lovely record of a man simultaneously playing an accordion and a mouth harp left him cold, and he openly derided the beautiful paper roses in the Wells' front room.

Sunsets and flowers and the song of the mockingbird, on the other hand, had meanings for him that they lacked for the rest of the family, and the brief period of the brown thrasher's singing in the spring usually took him out all day into the woods. His brothers spoke only of the bird's forever "hollerin'." There was a pool of standing water down among the grove of willow trees along the railroad track, and this he said "did things to him." When his father looked at him and asked him what he meant, he could only repeat the words, and offered no explanation. His father turned away and said he was "loony." His brothers were equally lacking in understanding of his refusal to go hunting with them. To them, to see a live thing was to wish to destroy it, to get its dead body into their hands, if only for the sake of

throwing it aside the next moment as being “nothing.” Daniel extracted other joys from living things. To him there was a thrilling experience in seeing a great horned owl fly away through the shadowy trees on silent wings at his approach, or in hearing its wild scream in the middle of the night. One spring he suddenly realized that the bright hosts of the migrating birds had come straight up from spending the winter in far-away Central America, or even farther south, and he tried to picture the jungles and the great heathen idols smothered with lush vegetation, which these same bits of gay colored birds had just left. Lizards and snakes he did not at all hate, as his brothers did, and

he felt more of interest than of fear or of animosity when, under some rock, he came across a scorpion, or when some wasp or hornet came sailing about him, investigating.

Where he had got this strange nature of his, who can say?

His father was a thin and soiled man in worn garments of tertiary hues whose life-work was the trading of horses and cows and mules, and the raising of enough fodder to carry these animals over the winter. Wholly subordinate to the creatures over which he was ostensibly master, the man was, as a matter of fact, only a sort of beast of the field himself, a servant to the animals he owned, hardly human in his attributes, bestial surely in his daily habitudes. In a burst of energy, one year, it is true, he had planned the draining of the wet stretch of road that lay before his upper pasture, to the east of the house. Here the waters from a patch of woodland across the road gathered annually and lay all

the fall and winter and spring, seeping through the old haphazard wall and making of three-quarters of his upper field a swampy ground where only the geese and ducks could take delight, and where the corn he attempted to raise waxed but thinly into maturity. He had the brilliant conception of utilizing these waters for the more complete irrigation of the whole field, and, with the three older of his sons, he labored for the better part of a month at the cutting of a deep ditch along the entire upper

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length of the plot, inside the fence, and the laying of tiles, most costly now since the war. When the project was finished, and the first fall rains descended, it was found that water would not flow up hill over the gentle rise in the enclosure. Then Mr. Durnan cursed the obstinacy of nature and settled down once more to the bitter contemplation of his swampy land. His father and his grandfather before him, over in Tennessee, had likewise been traders in cattle and, so too, in generations before that, even, if the truth had been known, back to the time of Chaucer, when the Black Plague had made swapping more profitable than working in the field at wages fixed very low by act of Parliament. The Durnans had been seven generations in America, a proud boast if you will.

Mrs. Durnan came of better stock than her husband. She had been a Gallagher, born in northern Pennsylvania, in the Irish colony on the old Rose estate there, a group of farmer tenants imported a hundred years ago straight from the ould sod into the wilderness about Silver Lake by a friend of Fenimore Cooper, Dr. Rose, who had envisaged a landed property in America

like the vast domains in England. Her parents had started west just after the little girl was born, and, the wagon breaking down in Missouri, they had camped there and then built a log cabin in the woods, and finally settled permanently. Here it was that Mr. Durnan had wooed and won his wife. On that occasion he had, with his

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brother, taken twenty-five mules up to St. Louis, with the elder brother riding ahead, on his saddle mare., leading two other horses on a line, and, with whistling and singing, luring on the long straggling line of loose mules, which stretched out for nearly a quarter of a mile, and was finally brought up by the younger Durnan on his horse, driving on with wave of hat and cries aloud the two stragglers that invariably dawdled last.

On the trip up he had wooed and won, and on the trip back he had claimed his bride and brought her south to his hill farm. At that time, twenty years before, she had weighed but little more than a hundred pounds; and now, twelve times a mother and old beyond her years, she still weighed the same. Her offspring, assembled on one Fairbanks scale, would have aggregated some six or seven times her own weight. Abundantly had this couple utilized their God-given powers of bringing life into the inanimate, converting the world of matter into the world of spirit.

In the early days Mrs. Durnan used to remember the Irish songs she had heard her father sing, which he in turn had heard from his mother. All the first Durnan children had been sung to sleep with these melodies on the front porch in the twilight, and Daniel's fondest memories of his infancy were of lying in his mother's lap while she rocked and sang the words of "The Gentle

Maiden” or “The Snowy-breasted Pearl.” These had been his favorites, although

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on less meditative occasions he had liked, too, “Cockles and Mussels,” with its so incomprehensible words, and “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” and those two stirring songs of “The Harp That Once” and “The Minstrel Boy.” Then there was that thrilling song about “St. Patrick Was a Gentleman,” with the wonderful statement in it that the saint’s father was a Gallagher... and had not Daniel’s own mother been of the same name! It was years now since the boy had heard his mother sing the old songs through, but still they dwelt with him, and often in lonely corners of the woods or on moonlight nights he would find himself humming them, patching together the words as best he could, odd and unmeaning though many of them were. They held a sentimental interest for him like that of some tongue we have spoken in our youth but have long since lost the use of. He lingered over them, and sometimes would pester his mother to furnish him some word that had slipped from him, or to explain the meaning of some term in the songs. He was the only one of her children on whom the songs had made this impression, and his hankering after them half-irritated, half-flattered her, so that she would push’ him out of her way to continue her house work and tell him not to be a-bothering of her, and then would spend the rest of the morning trying to recollect the thing he had asked for, and would hum and sigh and finally, almost ashamed of herself for her weakness in encouraging the child’s vagaries, she would give

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him the words he had wanted, or would even, on rare occasions, sing over the whole song for him so far as she could remember it, first making sure that her husband and the rest of the children were beyond ear-shot. None of the younger Durnans had ever heard the old songs, for with each new occasion of her maternity, Mrs. Durnan had more and more taken as a matter of course her motherhood, and had allowed her later offspring to bring themselves up. She was too much occupied nowadays to sit in the twilight and sing nonsensical old songs to children who could just as well go to sleep in the lap of some older sister in the family.

Daniel had been named for his mother's father, and was the only one of her children for whose naming she had thus gone back to the old stock. Somehow or other the fact took a strange grip on him, and he liked to "think back," as he called it, on his mother's youth and on her parents and on the few isolated facts that she had at various times been able to furnish him with. This gave him a different world in which to dwell, and, be it confessed, much of the time that he was, according to the flesh, moving in the presence of his father or his brothers, he was, according to the spirit, which was so much more important to him, walking with his ancestors in far-away Ireland or dwelling with the people of the songs.

There's one that is pure as an angel,
And fair as the flow'rs of May,
They call her the gentle maiden
Wherever she takes her way.
Her eyes have the glance of sunlight,
As it brightens the blue sea wave,

And more than the deep sea treasure
The love of her heart I crave.

Daniel could never make the actuality of his sisters or of any of the girls he had seen in Missouri rural places fit in with that picture.

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The Reverend Mr. Holcomb passed through the entrance to the Durnan yard without touching the gate. For, in sooth, the slatted barrier had hung aslant by one hinge for lo! these many months, its repair having gone no further than a daily remark by Mr. Durnan to the effect that he was going to get at that thing. The same remark had been used for over a year also, for the repair of the front screen, which offered but a nominal defence against the flies, and for the patching of the porch roof, which served during a rain only to divert slightly the downward path of the waters, not much to hinder their passage.

Mrs. Durnan saw the advent of the minister, and with feminine insight foreknew the meaning of the visit, and its connection with the earlier visitation from Mrs. Kellogg.

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“Jo, you’ll have to tell him,” she addressed her husband.

Mr. Durnan looked out, saw the preacher, and said “Damn!” Then there was a pressing of little Durnans towards the doorway, and Mr. Holcomb knew that he was expected. He met the sea of faces without a smile

upon his countenance. He was chewing a toothpick in grim determination.

Mr. Durnan lurched out of the broken screen door as the minister approached the porch, and volunteered a "Howdy." The man of God vouchsafed a nod of his head and then mounted the steps to take the one good chair without a word of explanation. Mrs. Durnan lingered inside the doorway, out of sight, with her apron poised against her cheek, ready near her eyes, fearful of the interview that was about to ensue. Already, in her nervous excitement, she knowed that her dinner wasn't goin' to rest well on her. Silently she had given Joe, the youngest girl, into the arms of Jim, her eldest daughter.

"What's this I hear," began Mr. Holcomb ponderously, wielding his toothpick the while, which but added the more to the terrible impersonality of his voicing the will of God, "what's this I hear about a child of sin over here, a thing of infamy, stinking in the nostrils of the Lord, a breath of vengeance from the Almighty?" He paused to hiccough, and Mr. Durnan shifted uneasily from one foot to the other as he leaned against the side of the house.

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"Is it true or ain't it?" continued the minister, more directly, looking up over his poised toothpick. Once more Mr. Durnan shifted his shoulder against the wall of his house, and waited before answering.

"Yes sir," he nodded slowly, "I guess it is." He was pulling now at the uneven length of his moustache on one side, looking blankly at Mr. Holcomb's right shoulder. "I can't say but it is. "

"Can't say but it is!" echoed the minister in wrath. "You've saw the thing, ain't you? You've laid eyes on

the vessel of abomination? You've witnessed the degradation of the Lord?"

"Yes sir," answered Mr. Durnan meekly.

"Well, what do you mean then, you only guess it is?" He paused. "And I hope you've been stirred to shame in the name of God."

Mr. Durnan raised his eyes to the Jones buggy that was just jogging by in the road, containing both Mr. Jones and his wife. He was glad of the rickety condition of that vehicle whose rattle no doubt prevented the words of the wrathful preacher from reaching their ears. They were both looking in on the scene, however, and in an uninspired moment Mr. Jones raised a hand of greeting to Mr. Durnan. He was too much stricken to reply. Mr. Holcomb also saw the gesture, but deigned no sign of recognition; for he was intent on lashing up a stormy scene, and moreover, the Joneses were alien to his branch of the

Christian faith, hailing from Mount Zion further on towards Farmingville.

"I hope you're tremblin' before the face of the Almighty," he swung in once more to his attack.

"It's the first time any such thing has ever happened to me in all my years," asseverated Mr. Durnan meekly.

"Well I should hope so," blustered the other, sucking his toothpick and crossing his legs. "I should hope you wasn't proud, as a father and a God-fearing citizen, to have this here thing happen in your own house. Are you?" "No sir," agreed Mr. Durnan to the rather unnecessary question. He was so accustomed, however, to the brow-beatings and the bullyings of the minister,

both in the pulpit and out of it, that there seemed to him nothing untoward in their present relationship.

Mr. Holcomb now felt that he had the man sufficiently cowed before him that he might with safety approach the subject of the paternity in the case. If there was any slightest suggestion that his son was the father of Sally's child, he would storm and rage and bellow religious terms until in very fear of the curse of God the idea would be driven from the man's head.

"Where is the brazen creature now?" he demanded. "Where is she lying in her sin and her degradation, banished from the sight of the Lord? Amen! Huhn?"

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"Down in the pasture," answered Mr. Durnan."

Down in the pasture, sweltering in the fires of hell to come, I hope," continued the other, abandoning for a moment his manipulation of the toothpick, which merely stuck up from one corner of his mouth.

"I hope she is filled with shame!" he added.

For the first time Mr. Durnan smiled the ghost of a smile. "I can't rightly say she does," he replied, and spat off the edge of the porch.

"We must make her! We must make her!" raged the minister, bringing down his fist on the arm of the chair. "We'll pray over her, we'll exhort her, we'll show her up to all the people round about here. That's what we'll do. We'll make a horrible example of her!"

Still Mr. Durnan remained passive. It seemed rather strange to him that the Reverend Holcomb should so carry on about the poor old animal in her misfortune. Still, old Belle could stand it all right, if the rest of them could. The thought of her being prayed over and exhorted to righteousness struck him as queer, but

Reverend Holcomb certainly knew the preacher business, and foresaw what was best, no doubt.

“We’ll have no Magdalenes walking about these parts, I’ll tell you that,” stormed the minister, once more returning to the attack upon his toothpick. Mr. Durnan blankly allowed the remark to pass, not knowing what it meant.

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“We’ll go down and pray over the erring sister now,” he said, and he led the way from the porch.

The prospect of Belle and her prodigy being prayed over by Reverend Holcomb drew forth the whole Durnan family from the back door immediately, so that a straggling procession followed the minister down through the lower gate, across the railroad tracks, and into the lower pasture. This was, in the eyes of the youngsters, the most important thing that had ever happened in the annals of the family, and even Mrs. Durnan felt an incipient pride which she would not acknowledge to herself. It showed itself, however, in the more lenient manner of chiding her offspring as they went too fast or too slow about her footsteps.

The sun was hot, and the rails of the Frisco hummed and quivered along their length under the torrid rays. Inside the gate of the lower pasture a sow in her pen grunted and whined, expectant of food at the approach of man. The gates here were all efficient, because of the practical nature of the work they must fulfill, with daily passing trains, dangerous to errant live stock.

They hung but loosely on their hinges, however, and must be lifted bodily aside for passage. Mr. Durnan opened them, and the last one through made them fast.

The reverend gentleman stood waiting until his host had raised the portal, lifting no hand himself to the task.

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Down across the lower pasture they made their way, toward the clump of trees in the lower corner. The hulking form of the minister went first, and Mr. Durnan a step or so behind him. Further removed, with the children trotting in a ragged group, and Mrs. Durnan in their midst, came the others. Mr. Holcomb was conscious of his following, but was not averse to having an audience for the scene he was about to enact. Accustomed as he was to having spectators to his actions and speeches, he moved to the present transactions with waxing dignity and importance. He would better be able to mount to his finest heights of denunciation if there were people to witness his fulminations.

Finally they came within sight of Belle, and Mr. Durnan glanced sidewise at the face of the minister. He too had seen the old mare, but only in a passing glance, as it were, and then his eyes had wandered on in quest of the object of his search. Suddenly a voice in the group behind him caught his attention, and he turned sharply to see Sally herself present among the group that was following him to the scene of his persecution. She was mingled innocently with the others, carrying on her hip the youngest of the Durnans, aged one year. All eyes, her own included, were fixed on the astonished face of the minister, as he whirled about, his mouth momentarily opened and speechless.

Then a burst of laughter, patently infantile and yet strangely mature, came from behind the minister,

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a laugh that somehow made them all shudder. And once more whirling about, Mr. Holcomb saw, peering about in front of old Belle's shoulder, the bald head of a very young baby, and its mouth was spread in a wide toothless grin as it looked at him. There was silence for a moment until once more the mirthless laugh of the infant rang out, and then, moving from behind its mother, the thing displayed the awful truth of its structure, and stood full to view, high on its spindling legs.

The eyes of the minister sprang wide open, and the utter stupefaction of the man in the presence of this mystery betrayed completely his spiritual kinship with the humble Durnans. They were but a group of startled mortals standing amazed, all of them, before this monstrosity. All distinctions human and divine were razed and blotted out, they stood all on the same awkward level of incomprehension, child and man alike, horse-trader and that preacher to whom ordinarily they universally bowed their heads in willing subordination.

"It ain't so, it ain't so!" breathed Mr. Holcomb hoarsely, more to himself than to the others. Then he brushed his hand over his face and swallowed hard. This seemed to bring him back to his sense of the fitting, and once more he rose to the sense of his superiority over these people and anything that might be theirs. The toothpick once more came into requisition, and the sense of wonder was once more put away. His eyes took on their customary glaze

of beefy self assurance. The man was master of the situation.

"Humph!" he commented sphinx-like, with shrewd comment in his look. He was not sure what his comment

would be, but now once more he was conscious of the audience about him, and the dominance that was his. Casually, insolently, he strolled over toward Belle and her offspring, with never a further word for the Durnans. He and his boy were safe from the prosecutions he had dreaded. As he walked, he performed a hosanna with his toothpick.

His inspection of the creature was somewhat spasmodic, made more difficult by the fact that Belle seemed bent on keeping herself between the minister and her colt, which also, after that first frank revelation of its body, managed to keep itself consistently screened beyond Belle's sturdy barrel. So it was that only by dint of stooping down, squatting on his heels to look under the mare's body, in as dignified and casual a manner as he could compass, Mr. Holcomb could satisfy his curiosity as to the structure of the thing.

"When was this creature foaled?" he demanded judicially of Mr. Durnan, in a manner to keep that man morally at his proper distance.

"Last night, Mr. Holcomb," answered Mrs. Durnan, speaking up for the first time. "I was the first as seen it, and I can tell you it gave me a start, something awful. I ain't over it yet."

Mr. Holcomb ignored the presence and the reply

of the woman, and continued, as best he could, his leisurely pursuit of a view of the beast. It was difficult to appear master of the situation under the circumstances, but what man could do, Mr. Holcomb did, remaining calm and cool, dominant. Once he managed to catch hold of a wrist of the young animal, but the child cried out and Belle lunged in his direction with a snort, and Mr.

Holcomb jumped back quickly, for just an instant alarmed. Then he spoke to the mare reprovingly and tried to look as though this too he in his omniscience had planned, moving on to other things with an air that implied that it did not matter, it did not matter. Sally, with her supposed maternity, he would now fain have forgot. He was glad within him that he had not mentioned her by name in his previous suspicions.

“Let us pray,” he said solemnly, at length, turning to the assembled Durnans, his ascendancy over them once more complete. And there in the lower corner of the pasture, in the shade of the trees, the whole family knelt down and listened to the voice of Mr. Holcomb as he informed the Deity of what had taken place, asked the Almighty to sanctify this creature in their midst, and requested God to bless the little child that had been brought into their community, that it might yet be made a useful member in Christ, although so little wrought in the image of the Lord. He petitioned the Throne of Grace that it might grow up to be a good worker, whereupon Mr. Durnan burst forth with a hearty Amen, not having

previously considered this phase of the matter. And so, while the Reverend Mr. Holcomb went on to ask the Lord to put it into the hearts of the Durnans one and all to be faithful in their support... “in money, oh God, as well as in service,”... of the one and only true faith, Mr. Durnan was resolving in his head the considerations which this first suggestion had drawn forth. It would be fine, he suddenly realized, to be able to send the thing out to work, and not to have to send one of the boys along. Lines would be unnecessary when he was hitched to the plow, for you could just call to him. Gates, of

course, would be a special trouble, since he could open all barriers freely.

Here the further cogitations of Mr. Durnan were cut short by Mr. Holcomb's bringing his prayer to a close. The family rose from their devotions and brushed off their knees, Mr. Durnan opened his eyes and rose too, and the young centaur was safe for the present from the shot-gun in Missouri.

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The casual traveler leaving Roosevelt by road finds it a place easily fled, for on almost all sides there are steep declivities first to be manipulated before rolling away to the plains or south into the mountains. The town is builded on a hill; at least the centre of all things, the Square, is there located. Thence descend the rigidly reticulated streets in all directions; towards Campustown, that section given

over largely to the shops and the soda fountains chiefly designed for the University students, and hence more expensive than those in The Center, about the Square; towards The Acre, where are huddled the picturesque but otherwise insufficient homes of the Negro population; towards the south, really almost too precipitous for the homes of any but goats, and therefore mostly undeveloped; towards Mount Fair, until recently an unconsidered hillock with a sublime view over the Ozarks to the south, and now become the most exclusive residence section of the city, where all the new wealth of oil men, lumber dealers, and merchant princes has been directed. Just as in old French towns the cathedral or the

church was the central pivot of the town, or in Germany the castle or the palace of the monarch, so here the Post Office, squat French renaissance with, however, something unmistakably American about its white brick and red sandstone, in the middle of the Square, sums up the highest aspirations and spiritual meaning of the community. Intercourse under a postage stamp is lord of the realm, with “ads” and bills and newspapers in overwhelming majority. The courthouse and the jail, relegated to obscure streets a block away, cannot compare with its dominance. The University, rearing its two towers on the hill a mile northwest, is nowhere. The noble high mass of wooded slope to the east of the town, looming at the end of every prospect, for the most of the inhabitants simply does not exist. Latterly, to be sure, it has

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taken on importance, since a public subscription has bought the place and turned it over to the Methodist Assembly. This is expected to lure vast numbers of visitors into “our beautiful little city,” and swell the pockets of the merchants. East Hillside has now become Mount Paradise, and is looked at even by bankers sometimes.

Down from Mount Fair at half-past five that evening there started a boy of sixteen. He wore overalls, of a lovely cerulean hue, although the boss would only have said they were faded. A battered old brown felt hat was set squarely on his head, shading his eyes from the rays of the descending sun as he let himself jolt quickly down the steep sidewalk and turn west along McKinley Avenue. There was a swarthy tone to the boy’s face, and his eyes were dark, and his hair was black, with one

suggestion of a curl showing at one temple, which he assiduously would have kept out of sight beneath the hat, had he known it. A fine crisp self-contained air was about the lad as he swung west. He was whistling "Adeste Fideles," but would not have known it had you told him so. Two thin shavings of pine still lingered about the hair at the nape of his neck, and a faint residue of sawdust lay in the worn folds of his overalls. One thumb was bound up in a bit of cloth, once white, and his arms, displayed to the elbow, where the sleeves of his blue shirt were rolled back, were marked here and there by long shallow scratches as from the rough end of a board. On his

upper lip was the faintest adumbration of a shadow not yet to be named a moustache.

Down past the railroad station and out along the track he went, oblivious to people but noticing the bits of moss and meagre vegetation along the sidewalk, and annexing, for a block or so, a stray dog scouting for food or friendship. At one deserted point on the tracks, out from town, he paused, stopped his whistling, and from a pocket produced a short comb and a small circular mirror with a celluloid back advertising flour. When his hat was removed, a flare of black hair was revealed, obstinately bending into a sea-wave curve where evidently its owner would have preferred sleek straightness. A new idea had just occurred to the boy, and forthwith, first making sure that he was alone, he tried the effect of parting the dark wave on one side and pressing down the two segments with his hands. The comb would hardly penetrate through the heavy mass of hair. Then he discovered a young girl was approaching close upon him along the

track just around the bend, and he clapped his hat upon his head and strode on past her, his cheeks very red, the offensive comb and mirror clutched in his hand, hidden from sight. He was furious with himself, and would not look at the girl, who was about his own age. When she found that he was not looking at her, she looked at him instead, and even turned once, as though she were looking at the landscape, and then gazed long at his retreating figure.

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At the viaduct he clambered down, and struck out along the road due west, past the old dairy place, sheltered high on its hill, among the trees, and past the mean little row of houses, slatternly and drab, where lived some of the mill workers. Only one of them could boast of a second story, and it, accordingly, was known locally as the Big House. On the right, was a little stream of water, and a clump of willows that he liked. Some day that spot was going to come into his mind whenever he saw a Corot. There was an open stretch of grass, too, along the road, which evidently belonged to nobody, and here the berry-pickers and other gipsy folk camped in their wagons, lighting little fires where sometimes you saw them sitting late, talking about God knows what, while their tethered animals grazed comfortably round about them. Then there was the long congeries of low red sheds and piles of lumber and two high smoking stacks, which made the Mill. On the right was a corner grocery with its inevitable tumble-down porch, where men in worn garments congregated and smoked and spat and talked interminably. Then, silent save for one wild week in the year, the Roosevelt County Fair Grounds, where usually a score of cows were feeding in the

paddock of the race-course, and where for years Daniel had been watching the history of a family of killdeers. As he passed the place this evening he could hear them wheeling and screaming their wild calls over the flat expanse of open grass.

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Now it was, too, that the white front of the Holy Roller church was first visible, across one corner of the Fair grounds. The old cow sheds along the highway had recently been removed, and a barbarous concoction of barbed wire and steel posts put up instead. But over in front of the church the high fence of weather-beaten upright boards was still standing, passing like a blindfold across the front of the building, so that neither windows nor doors were visible. The high white painted gable of the church alone was to be seen, with its locomotive bell perched before it on a forked tree trunk for belfry. The red building of the deserted old cross-roads store pressed back its rear into the side windows of the church, and in front it gazed upon its prosperous rival, recently built, which had just forced it into desuetude. Both of these structures boasted the square false front above their gable ends, without which no country store in Missouri would feel itself properly attired.

Daniel passed along the elbow of the road, which here makes a bold double turn before it takes its final dash west towards Farmingville. The boy was always thankful for this bend in the road, for although it brought him face to face with a hideous example of the typical slovenly houses of this region, set up without foundations further than a rickety pile of stones and bricks here and there, it also first revealed to him that blue and shadowy vista

into the southern hills, which for him formed the chief delight

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of the Durnan home. So it was that frequently he would sit alone on the steps of the back porch, feasting his eyes and his soul on the beauty of the scene, wandering off in fancy into those fastnesses of the Ozarks down towards Arkansas and beyond, while the rest of the family sat on the front porch, waiting for something to go by on the dusty highway for them to look at.

The Kellogg house on the right, new with its coat of undigested brown and its sour greenish-yellow paint; and a nondescript house on the left, painted like most of the local structures, years ago a hot and muggy red, comforting to the eye perhaps on a frosty morning, but unbearable even to look upon in July or August; and then only the woods at the right, and the field, still undrained, at the left, and Daniel turned in at the open gate to his home... God save the mark! The six o'clock whistles were just blowing, and far away in the courthouse the clock, the only clock bell in the city, was striking the hour. Daniel had walked his two miles from Mount Fair in standard time, and the young carpenter was free until the morrow.

Supper was late to-night, owing to the untoward excitement of the new arrival, for, now that its existence was, as it were, officially cognized, the whole family had spent most of the afternoon bringing in friends and even casual passers-by on the road to see the prodigy. Daniel's arrival at home was taken very calmly by the family, and indeed less was made

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of his coming than of most of the people who had passed that way since noon. He was looked upon as “queer” and so it would have been beneath the dignity of almost any member of the family to break the news to him. When finally he asked a question or two concerning the affair, only brief and irritated answers were vouchsafed to him, as though the speaker were concerned with too important matters long to be troubled with anything that Daniel could bring up. So, quietly he washed his hands and face, and possessed himself until after supper. His not flying down incontinently for a preliminary glimpse before the meal was looked upon as additional evidence of his “queerness” by the Durnans, who talked of it among themselves before the boy. He sat on the back steps and waited for supper, listening to a great horned owl over in the direction of Mount Liberty to the southwest, the highest point in the county, virgin woodland to the summit.

After the refection, consisting of salt pork and potatoes, with hot bread and molasses by way of variation, Daniel was glad to escape from the eternal racket of the family, and to go down through the evening quiet towards the lower pasture. The six-forty-five rocked by on its unsteady rails just as he was approaching the gate, and left an unpleasant aftermath of sound and smell, gradually dissipated. This was the last of the trains until the seven o'clock freight west the next morning, thank Fortune. At any rate, this was not a much traveled route.

The lad's approach to the centaur was different from that of any one who had come to see it that day. In the first place, since Mrs. Durnan's unanticipated falling

upon the thing that morning, he was the first to come alone. The others had felt a certain sense of fear and distrust in the presence of the monstrosity, and had gained confidence to approach it only in a group. Mr. Durnan himself had felt “shakey” in its contemplation, and to most of the visitors that day it had “given the creeps.” This nervousness had for the main part manifested itself in an inordinate amount of jolting and facetious talk, which gave them a comforting sense of their superiority after all, and furnished relief from the discomfiting gaze of the infant, poised self-confident and impudent on its slender colt’s body.

Daniel could hardly believe his eyes when finally they rested on the thing, even though he had heard a multitude of repeated details from the babbling lips of the crowd at the supper table. It reminded him of the time he had seen his first aeroplane. After photographs and newspaper descriptions the thing had still come upon him as a distinct shock, with a sense of reality which only reality could give. So now, actually to see this creature walking about, bending, rising, leading an existence of its own, independent, carrying on its own complicated existence, responding to stimuli, and finally coming to a gaze with its eyes fixed on the boy; Daniel halted where he was, twenty feet away, and then seated himself

cross-legged on the grass for a long contemplation of the animal-child.

He was not afraid, he was not disquieted. He was interested. When finally he and the strange creature had examined one another for several minutes with hardly a shifting of the eyes, he lifted his hand and called gently, in a voice which almost invariably brought to him dogs

and cats in the street, and which had eventually, after many pausings and doubts, frequently brought even wrens and robins and chipmunks to eat out of his hand. "Come on, pretty thing," he said low, "come along. Come over here. Come here, baby. Come along now, don't be afraid." Old Belle raised her head and looked at him, quivering her nostrils with a hardly audible whinny, and then fell to grazing once more. Almost imperceptibly she shifted her direction, towards the boy, and when next she moved a foot it was to wander nearer to Daniel seated on the ground. Idly he was plucking bits of grass and throwing them aside in the deepening twilight, sunk in a rich contentment, glad to be away from the rest of the family, although he could not have spoken the peace that was upon him. "Come along, honey," he would call every once in awhile, and the colt, which once or twice had capered weakly beside the old mare, would turn and look at him once more, having for the moment forgotten this strange silent creature who fitted so meltingly into the twilight without a jar, unlike the other visitors who had that day invaded the field.

His mother's voice, calling down through the twilight in a short upward glissando, "Dan—iel!" broke the peace of the scene. He knew that she did not really insist on his presence. It was only to preserve the sense of parental control that she thus called to him. When again the ugly cry had come down through the silence, in very self-defence against its repetition he raised his voice, "All right!"

"Come up out of there, you'll catch your death of cold!" remonstrated his mother angrily from the lower gate of the house lot, out of sight but stridently audible.

A moment later the back door of the house was heard to close with a bang, and then once more the boy had the silent twilight to himself. Belle was by this time within ten feet of the lad, who now sat with his hands loosely clasped about his raised knees. The colt came near once, tentative and half alarmed, and looked at Daniel as though hesitant about approaching nearer. The boy sat quite still, hoping, but after making a brief start forward, the colt ran quickly on unsteady legs to the further side of its mother.

Then Daniel turned his thoughts to other important matters. There was the subject of his hair, for instance, which earlier in the afternoon he had, in an unfortunate moment, revealed to the girl along the railroad track. Looking about him, he now once more drew forth the comb and the mirror, and after still a further survey about him in the almost dark which now reigned, he examined himself in the glass,

and fell to parting his hair once more on the left side.

“A plume!” he chuckled to himself quietly, tugging to get the comb through the masses of his dark hair. He was quoting, this lad in the depths of rural Missouri; and what he was quoting was a phrase from George Meredith’s “Ordeal of Richard Feverel,” although he had neither read the book nor even heard its name. But “she” had used the words, and “she” whom Daniel could not bring himself to mention even when alone except in that unrevealing monosyllable, had read the book, and had wittingly quoted to the lad the two words, fitting alike, in this case, to both the young English aristocrat and the young boy of Missouri, off among the Ozarks.

She it was whom Daniel had met earlier that spring on an unforgettable Sunday afternoon among the hills, a meeting that had come to have so great an importance in his life, although the family was still in ignorance of it. And he had been up several times since then. On the further brow of the high hill to the north she lived, and in the woods, behind the house, with a wide sweep of view off in all directions, like an eagle's vision, as it seemed to Daniel, the boy had suddenly, that first time, come upon the woman as she was sketching in oils, and she had turned, and raised her eyes, and, after a moment's gaze, smiled at him.

"Are you fond of painting?" she had asked in a

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pleasant voice unlike any human voice Daniel had ever heard.

"Yes ma'am," the boy had replied. "Or, I mean, I don't know, I never saw any." Then he had blushed uncontrollably and been prepared to hate the woman because she had so embarrassed him. But she had not laughed at him, but instead, had gone on speaking in that same low steady voice.

"Well, come down and see whether you like mine, at any rate," she had said pleasantly, and the boy had scrambled down from the rocks, and had come round beside her. As he did so, he took off his hat, and the eyes of the woman rested on his features a moment longer before she turned and with him examined the work before them.

She was a woman of thirty-five or so, a more sophisticated person would have said, although to Daniel's simpler psychology she was at first simply "old." She had dark lustrous eyes and low sweeping

waves of dark hair, in which here and there, were gray single threads. A broad soft hat of heavy felt descended low to shade her eyes, and a veil was woven about its brim and descended on each side behind, framing the face in a soft shadowy depth out of which it seemed to glow. She was seated on a folding stool such as painters affect out of doors, and she had a light, folding easel, on which was poised a small canvas. She was wearing an old seal skin jacket, which showed its seams brown and worn, but which nevertheless to Daniel seemed the very

epitome of elegance. He marveled to see her hold her oily palette in such careless contact with the sleeve. The left thumb, thrust through the hole of the board, was the smallest and whitest digit he had ever seen.

The painting on the canvas was to him frankly incomprehensible, and he was wondering what he should say. It was still unfinished, that he could make out; the disconcerting roughness of the paint would hardly allow him to pierce beyond to the subject which she was trying to depict.

“You don’t think much of it, do you?” she laughed gently, looking up frankly into his face, where again her eyes lingered and wandered for a moment.

“Well, I suppose it isn’t finished yet,” he suggested. He remembered the painting of roses that come on one of the bank calendars, and the framed painting in the parlor of the Wells family, whither he had once been allowed to penetrate. Those were certainly much smoother than the present example of painting. Moreover, the Wells’ picture had a mother-of-pearl castle perched on a hill, with a real clock in the tower of it, which you wound and set like any other clock, and then

told the time by looking at it. There was nothing remotely resembling such things here.

“Richard’s plume!” she had inconsequentially murmured to herself, half moodily. Then she spoke to him directly once more. “Half close your eyes, and then look at it. That’s the way with modern

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painting, at first, you know, if you’re only accustomed to the old.”

Daniel did as he was bid, but still with no success.

“Step back a little,” she further directed him, as though he were a friend whose opinion she sincerely cherished. But still to no avail.

“You still don’t get it?” she asked sympathetically. “Now look out there at the sunlight between the trees, with the fresh young fields stretching off there to the northern horizon with no two of them the same color. See how wonderfully they contrast with the gloom of the trees here in the woods? Oh, it’s like wine, my boy, it’s like wine!”

Once more Daniel half closed his eyes and tried to see the painting the woman had been working on. He was a little tremulous with fear, for she had mentioned wine, and suddenly, filled as were his ears with the preachings of the Reverend Mr. Holcomb, he had wondered if she were wicked. He sighed a little.

“You’re quite right, of course,” once more laughed the woman, looking at the canvas critically. “I haven’t caught the sheer magic of the color. I seem to be painting with mud, don’t I?” Then she turned upon him sweetly and asked him, “What’s your name?”

“Daniel,” he responded briefly.

“Oh, what a nice name!” she said simply. “Where did you get it?”

“I was named for my grandfather,” he answered,

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“Daniel Gallagher. And there’s a song... do you know it?... that says that St. Patrick’s father was a Gallagher. And so, maybe,” he hesitated, “I’m related to him.”

“Oh, delightful,” replied the woman who had now laid aside her painting tools and was following the boy’s talk devotedly.

“And what’s your name?” asked Daniel with an engaging frankness, as though she had been another person of his own age with whom he was speaking; except that, as a matter of fact, Daniel was finding her easier to speak to than any one he had ever met before.

“My name is Delacourt,” she replied, “Mrs. Delacourt, and I live in the house over there with my husband... when he’s home.”

Daniel once more started uneasily, for in the code of Mr. Holcomb and the community generally, a married woman should not talk with a man except on business, and then only when her husband was not present to speak for her. He hung silent, fearful that he was intruding.

“Well, I guess I’ll have to be going now,” he asserted, looking down at his hat in his hands.

“It’s been very nice to have you here,” said Mrs. Delacourt, rising, “and I hope you’ll come again to watch me paint. Maybe you’ll bring me better luck next time, will you?” Then had come the magic thing that had rung through Daniel’s veins ever since, sending him blushing only to think of it.

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Lightly she had touched her fingers to the heavy lock of dark hair above his forehead, before the boy could duck back involuntarily. "It's like a plume," she had laughed softly. "You ought to part it on the side."

How he had stumbled away through the trees, running like a frightened thing, as indeed he was, he had hardly remembered, but finally he had found himself breathless and panting at the foot of the hill, still tingling from that strange thing she had done at parting, the first person who had ever done anything to his hair except pull it savagely in combing, or wet it disconsolately for brushing, or inconsiderately twist his head for the better access of the scissors in cutting, as he sat perched before his mother's ruthless onslaught on the back porch with an apron tied about his neck.

He smiled now again at the thought of the woman's gesture. Then his mother's voice once more rising in angry crescendo roused him to actualities, and getting up from the ground, he moved up through the darkness, happy even though he faced a night of uneasy rest among the hosts of the Durnans.

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On Sunday there were objurgations against the Durnans, patent if not specific, on grounds that were but the more terrible and effective for being left in the region of matters too awful to be mentioned by

the Reverend Mr. Holcomb in those sacred walls. Seemingly the whole family must be doomed to a lifetime of repentant toil in requital of the sin and the obloquy which they had heaped upon the heads of the

community. In prayer and in sermon their egregious condition was paraded heartlessly before the congregation, so that Mrs. Durnan wept tears of repentance, about what she knew not, and in very sympathy the little Durnans also wept, more lifted up in spirit at their present position in public consideration, however, be it confessed, than in contrition of heart. It was lovely, and as Mrs. Durnan afterwards proudly remarked, "There wasn't a dry eye in the place." After which successful morning's activities, the whole congregation proceeded homewards and ate themselves into a comatose condition for the lethargy of a Sunday afternoon, in which, anyway, it was sinful to do anything. Mr. Holcomb was a little disappointed in the \$11.31 displayed by the collection plate at the end of the service.

There were passing references, too, to the absence of that young scapegrace, that renegade, that prodigal son wallowing among the shucks of the hog-pens of Sodom and Gomorrah, who had fallen away from the church of his fathers and run after strange gods. Everybody knew that Daniel was the person against whom the minister was now inveighing, and even the Durnans joined in on the spasmodic Amens which rang out in the little frame structure.

As a matter of fact, the particular hog-pen in

which Daniel was at that moment reclining was the church of the Protestant Episcopal faith in Roosevelt, where his soul was being rapt from his body by the strains of the organ, although the service seemed to him strangely jerky and disjointed and full of happenings, after the Holy Rollers' meetings to which he was

accustomed. This was the first morning that he had invaded the precincts of the dark little brick structure, shadowy and dull even on this bright sunny morning, because of the trees that topped the squat tower of the structure and spread a gloom inside. Yet still the boy felt comfortable and at home. In the first place, as he had stood out in front, wondering whether or not he dared to go in, a very stout man had descended from a big automobile at the curb, and after speaking a word to a vociferous young bulldog in the back seat, had approached with a black leather bag in his hand, and had stood for a moment to puff on the end of a cigar. He had looked at Daniel and then spoken to him, and at the first word there was something about the man that made the boy like him.

“Do you go to church here? ”Why don’t you come and sing in my choir?” Then without pausing for a reply he had passed into the church, to be revealed later, when Daniel did actually go in, as the organist, very firmly established on the bench of the instrument, sending forth such glorious sounds as the boy had never dreamed possible. Once he thought the man was looking at him, and at any rate, that brief

passage on the front step had given him a more friendly feeling than he had gained in any other church in town... and he had gone to nearly all of them.

That was the first reason for his liking the church.

The other lay in the fact that just after the first hymn, during which the minister and the others had marched in, arrayed in garments that seemed odd and terrible to Daniel, he had seen Mrs. Delacourt enter the church and take a seat beyond him, on the further side of the aisle.

Before she joined in the service she knelt for a moment and hid her face. With her was a man, whose features Daniel had not yet seen, but who he knew must be her husband.

This was the fourth Sunday that Daniel had deserted the gods of his family and had walked into Roosevelt in quest of music. The idea had first come to him one day when he was sitting talking to Mrs. Delacourt on the hill-top, while she attempted once more to capture the atmospheric effects of the mountain air bathing the lowlands beneath. She had asked him if he liked music and he had said that he had liked to hear his mother sing, but that he never heard any other music. Then she had suggested that some day he must come up to the house and hear some records and the piano, and had said that there was also music in the churches in town, although none of it very good. An organ was glorious, anyway, if played with any degree of skill, she had said.

That had been enough for him. On the following

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Sunday he left the house without saying anything and walked into town, choosing first the Baptist church on the corner, the most pretentious place of devotion in the town, with a bulbous dome and an entrance oddly resembling a prosperous theatre. The boy had difficulty in getting up his courage to brave the doorway, and if it had not begun to rain he might perhaps have fled without ever making the effort. But he had sought shelter in the portico of the structure, and then had edged his way to look in, and finally had entered the auditorium. He was blinded by the novelty of it all at first, but later found that he somehow did not like the green organ and the pink walls, with yellow woodwork, and still a different

shade of brown oak for the pulpit. There was present, even to his untrained senses, a lack of harmony that vitiated the organ music for him. He left the building without a word having been spoken to him.

That noon there were bitter denunciations and recriminations. There were the ancient threats of corporal punishment, although he was now too big and too well developed for the actual attempt of any such thing. The following Sunday he followed out his course of investigation once more and tried the Christian church; but he disliked the husky red-faced minister and the general tone of athletic efficiency that pervaded the place. Here, too, something was lacking. The following Sunday he tried a Presbyterian church, but the thin young girl at the organ

could not carry him away with her disastrous attempts at the key-board and once more he left the church, unspoken to and uncommitted for the following Sunday.

Now he was glad that he had sought further, and the rest of the service passed off for him in a happy daze composed chiefly of the side view of Mrs. Delacourt's face, and the swelling clouds of the music, that seemed to him to mount and climb into ethereal heights, which made him almost dizzy. Cold chills ran up his spine. During the sermon, which did not much interest him, since all pulpit oratory merely brought to his mind the vehemence and gesticulatory violence of Mr. Holcomb, he noticed that Mrs. Delacourt, too, was occupying herself with other matters than the text in hand. Finally she looked in his direction, and smiled briefly with her eyes and nodded the very slightest nod of her head. After that, her attention seemed more riveted on the words of

the rector. She settled herself in her seat and her eyes wandered no more over the church. Sometimes, however, in the middle of a periodic sentence from the pulpit she would change the position of her hands, and slightly moistening her lips with the tip of her tongue, she would seem to be coming out of a momentary reverie. Mr. Delacourt, beside her, sat quite still, with arms folded, his eyes steady on the preacher whose every word he was considering.

He was a thin wiry man, with humorous twinkling black eyes and a small pointed beard. His hair,

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Daniel noticed, was growing thin about the crown of his head. He was an anomaly in the community, a Frenchman, connected somehow with an art company in St. Louis, for whom he traveled, coming home only every other week or so. No one knew much about him or about the means by which he gained his livelihood. He had met Lolla Bayham while she was an art student up at Chicago, and they had been married now for fifteen years. Yet still he was a mystery to Roosevelt, where Mrs. Delacourt had continued to live in the old Bayham house, and where he had never spent more than one or two weeks at a time in the summers.

After the service, Daniel lingered in front of the church, until finally Mrs. Delacourt and her husband appeared in the door. She ran her eyes hastily over the people there congregated, and once more smiled at Daniel, and then turned to Mr. Delacourt, who was trying to disengage himself from the misplaced French accents of the associate professor of Romance languages at the University. Mrs. Delacourt glanced once more at the boy and raised her eyebrows smilingly, for him to wait, and

when her husband came, the two of them turned in the direction where Daniel was standing.

"This is the young man who has been helping me with my painting," she said to her husband. "This is Mr. Delacourt, Daniel." Daniel flushed, never before having heard himself referred to seriously as a young man. He hesitated, and stammered, until

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Mr. Delacourt, twinkling upon him with, his black eyes, held out a hand and grasped his own cordially.

"Ah, and what is it I hear about this creature that is born on your farm?" he demanded with a delicate French pronunciation so alien to the ears of the boy that he could not understand the words.

"Mr. Delacourt wants to hear about your young centaur, Daniel," said Mrs. Delacourt in explanation, and, upon hearing the words, two or three people passing by half halted, and looked with interest at the boy, having heard already some rumor of the prodigy near town.

Once more Daniel stammered and looked down.

"Oh," he said, turning half way, "it isn't anything."

"Dis lui que je voulais bien le voir, cet animal-là," said Mr. Delacourt.

"He'd like very much to see it, you know, Daniel," said Mrs. Delacourt, taking the boy's hand in farewell. Her husband had already turned away. "Come up and help me some more with my painting."

"Il me paraît un peu stupide, ton jeune ami," was the sole comment of Mr. Delacourt as they climbed into the Buick and started off. She turned to wave to Daniel, but he was engaged with two men on the curb, while a third stood listening to their talk.

Others would have liked to stop and listen, several instructors at the University, a banker or two, the leading clothier of the town, but it had been beneath

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their dignity, and they had passed on homewards to their Sunday dinners, leaving the boy in the hands of the lesser citizens, who had socially nothing to lose in this respect.

“What’s it look like, kid?” demanded one of the men, a barber. “How big is it?”

“Oh, about so high,” answered Daniel casually.

“Has it got a head on it?” asked another, a dry-goods clerk.

“Sure it’s got a head on it.”

“A man’s head?” went on the barber.

“A baby’s,” replied Daniel. He did not want to talk about it, somehow feeling it a reflection on the family thus publicly to discuss matters which were private.

“When was it born?” put in the third suddenly, in a business-like manner, since he worked on the local daily. He scented news.

“Thursday night.”

“Where do you live?”

“A mile out on the Farmingville road, past the Fair grounds.”

“Is it still alive?” struck in the barber once more.

“Sure it’s still alive,” said Daniel. “Well, I got to be going now.”

The embryo reporter stuck with him down the street, however, and gleaned one or two more facts from the boy, with, as he expressed it to himself, his nose for news that can’t be beat.

“I wish you’d a let us know about this sooner,”

were his parting words to Daniel. “We’d a run something in the paper about it. It’s kind of stale now.”

As a consequence of this rencounter, Monday evening’s “Roosevelt Journal” ran the following account of the happening on its front page. The editor of the sheet, “Doc” Andrews, a retired veterinarian, ordered that the affair be “played down,” since he did not much credit the details of the case, having long years of intimate knowledge of such matters. So the headline was small, and the paragraph appeared in the lower half of the page.

A colt said to have the head of a baby is now in the possession of Durnan one mile west of town, it was reported today. The animal is s alive and those who have seen the monstrosity say that it is about three f high. It has not yet been decided what disposition will be made of t creature.

The headline on this inspired bit of writing offered to the world this caption:

FARMER GETS FREAK COLT

Young Horse Born With Baby’s
Head West of Town

On Tuesday there were brief reports to the same effect in the leading St. Louis papers, and it may be remembered that the Associated Press sent out two lines announcing to the world the same bald

facts. One of the editors in the capital of the state telegraphed to its correspondent for more details, but before he could furnish them to his paper, Wednesday noon had come and gone, and it had been decided that the world should hear no more of the prodigy. The rest was silence.

For on Wednesday, the Lions held their weekly dinner in the basement of the Methodist church, served by the ladies of the institution, who thus were raising money to help pay for the new parish house next door. On this happy occasion a gentleman of the club, in order to cement the feeling of good fellowship in the community, and, incidentally, to “put one over on” the Rotarians, their oldest rivals in the town, had invited the high school seniors to partake with them of their regular weekly feast. The group of boys and girls, dismissed early from their classes, had marched down, two by two, through the streets of the town, led by an automobile loaded with Lions, one of whom held aloft on the running board a painted sign bearing on one side the legend, “The Lions Boost Roosevelt. Do U?” and on the other side were the words, “The Lions Roar a Welcome to Our Boys and Girls of R. H. S.” The superintendent of the schools, a little man of vast importance, whose very walk denoted his constant concern with the betterment of the universe, was a Lion, and rode in the car which led the way, his smile at once prominent and ostentatiously self-effacing.

The Lions were already foregathered in the basement

of the church to receive the young people, and as the students filed in, the leader of the club, Lion Winthrop, drummed on the head of the table and vociferated to the

Lions to "Roar! Lions, roar!" There were half-hearted groans and bellowings from the men, who stood about the wall of the room smiling palely. Two months ago this thing of roaring had struck them as a vastly amusing practice, and the first dinner of the newly constituted group had passed off as a very pandemonium of frenzied roaring, so that half the prominent business men of Roosevelt had that afternoon returned to their places of business proud of the hoarseness that proclaimed them Lions. On the present occasion, however, the amusing practice seemed somewhat to have palled on them, and the latter end of the procession of high school seniors entered the basement unroared at, despite the "tail-twister's" continued spasmodic drubbing, "Roar! Lions, roar!"

The young people were then directed to take their places among the Lions, alternating, so that the youths and the maidens were sifted among the men. Then the chairman, amid laughter, directed each Lion to offer "his paw" (loud laughter) to the young person to the right and the left of him, and to make him "or her" (laughter) feel right at home "in the Lions' den." (Laughter.) Silence fell upon them thereafter, except for the moving of one or two chairs caused by some young persons, forgetting the grace about to be spoken by Lion Thomas, the

Baptist minister. After the grace came the universal scraping of chairs and the first bustling entrance of the ladies with soup. The chairman commanded a roar of approval, which caused smiles but little merriment, and then the sounds of eating were heard through the basement. Of talk there was none, except where here and there some girl leaned over and said something across

the front of a Lion to another girl, or some Lion leaned back and expressed a business opinion to some brother Lion beyond. Forks were much played with, and from time to time the chairman bellowed forth an order to "Roar!" Smiles lit up cheerless faces like summer lightning each time the word was heard. Pasteboards with songs printed on them were passed, showing the unmistakable signs of gravy and soup from previous occasions, and Lion Williams placed himself at the Sunday school piano against the wall. With unflagging zeal the chairman again shouted the magic word across the unenthusiastic congregation, this time bidding them show the world "how Lions can roar to music." (Slight laughter.) Melody evidently did not today appeal to the Lions, however, despite the objurgations of the chairman to "put some true Lion pep into their roaring," (laughter) and "Pack Up Your Troubles" practically died a-borning. "There's a Long Long Trail A-winding" fared better, although the jaded zest of the Lions seemed to run more now to watches, as one o'clock drew near.

Lion Brough, the superintendent, was first called upon by the chairman, for a few remarks, after a word of welcome, and was greeted with roars. (Laughter.) As official repository of educational culture in the community, Mr. Brough was always most careful of his enunciation on public occasions, shaping his vowels meticulously and sharply clicking his consonants. He knew he was perfect. Now he spoke briefly of "this clawss," and of the "in-es-ti-ma-ble pri-vi-lege" which it had been theirs to enjoy on this present festive occasion, which he was sure they would ever remember, ever cherish. This reminded him of a story, which caused him

to smile a refined and educated smile, even before he recounted the anecdote. There was but mild amusement on its conclusion, for unfortunately the tale was no longer young; and then, after a seemingly return to serious considerations, he seated himself amid renewed roars. (Laughter and hand-clapping.)

Lion Harris, the real estate man, next rose and claimed the floor, regretting that he must bring up a matter of business into the presence of “these cubs,” (laughter) in whose welcome he had been glad to make himself hoarse by roaring. (More laughter.) He had noticed something in the local paper and in the state papers, too, he might add, about a misshapen colt that was on a farm west of town. He understood, from sources he was not free to mention, that further news of this thing was to be sent out to the state papers. He thought that it

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was the duty of the Lions, in their capacity of guardians of the best interests of the town, to put a stop to this newspaper story, which could not do anything to add to the reputation of “our beautiful little city,” and which might, as a matter of fact, turn away valuable interests from coming here. He wished therefore to make a motion to the effect that in the opinion of the Lions such an item ought to be kept out of the papers from now on. He sat down amid the nodding of heads and there were three or four dull secondings of the matter. As the one o’clock whistles could now be heard blowing, there was no further discussion of the question, and at the instigation of the chairman the Lions signified their “ayes” by roars (pause, but no laughter) and were then adjourned. Lion Harris and the chairman agreed together

to make the opinion of the Lions on this subject known to the editor of the local paper and to the correspondents of the state papers. The latter end of the Lions' entertainment frayed out somewhat unceremoniously, as the majority of the members had to get back to their places of business. Lion Brough became once more only the fussy little superintendent of schools, and directed the formation of the line for the return trip. When it was found that many of the students had already departed, he allowed the line to peter out and go back to its studies in twos and threes as it would.

On the next day the Rotary Club passed a similar motion, at what was acclaimed the most successful

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dinner they had ever had. Rivalry was keen between the two organizations, for originality of entertainments. So when the Rotarians found, as they foregathered on this Thursday noon, that they were to be regaled by a "backwards dinner," hilarity waxed high, and it was felt that the Lions would be hard put to it to overtop for novelty this brilliant stunt. Crumpled napkins and a toothpick were found at each place at table. Then, before a bite was eaten, a motion to adjourn was put through, and speeches were called for. Under the head of business, a motion similar to that of Lion Harris was introduced by "Jim" Fisher, the genial undertaker, and amid much pre-prandial jocularly the motion was unanimously passed. "Doc" Andrews, the ex-veterinarian editor of the local paper, looked wise and potent in the matter, and promised to keep it out of all the periodicals. "He could attend to that, all right," he darkly hinted, brushing it aside as a matter of small effort to one in his position.

Black coffee and a song started off the meal, after a side-splitting session with the toothpick, in which all were forced to join. Then followed ice-cream and cake, and next a chopped salad floating in a bath of vinegar, with which came however, the plate of cooled chicken and tepid mashed potatoes which was the weekly fare of the Rotarians. There was much ostentatious calling of first names across the table, as is the hearty fashion among the brothers of this clan. It was thrilling each week for the local printer

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to hail the dignified president of the University by his *nom de famille*, even though within the next half-hour he might be discussing with him, as Mr. President, in the latter's cold and formal office, the price of the new dairy bulletin. It was to be noted by the attentive, also, that President Bissel always managed to edge away gradually from such intimate contact with lesser lights of the town, and to move towards those more seemly groups composed of college deans, bank officials, and presidents of companies. He smiled when nobodies called him John, but he winced too, like a man touched in a sensitive spot. "Phil" Albright, the banker and richest man in town, condescended in the same way, to be first-named by the owner of the music store, whom later he did always manage, nevertheless, to replace in his proper level, quite easily and effectively.

Half-way through this course the Rotary president, "Tod" Brandenburg, a tall thin man, insurance, very bald, with a solemn long face which he managed to brighten into Rotary sprightliness, announced that he had a letter to read to the bunch. "Shut up, Sam!" he added with humorous severity, ". . . if you can!" The member thus

addressed, another of the richest men in town, amid much laughter acknowledged the affectionate attention of the chairman and waved his hand to indicate that he had finished. It was fine, felt more than one member present, to see so powerful a man so affably cowed to Rotary discipline. It leant a kindly glow to more

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than one heart there, whose owner's purse was thinner than that of the rich man.

"This is a letter from Mr. Horace Seidensticker, the jeweller, fellows," announced the chairman sententiously, and in the pause that followed there was complete silence. "A former member of this bunch," he added, straightening out the sheet of paper, and looking about the table significantly. "I am sorry to announce to you fellows, the best bunch of men in town (applause), that one of our former friends and associates has proved himself unworthy of Rotary, and has been dropped from the encircling grasp of her arms. God bless her! (Applause, continued.) Here's his letter, and you fellows can see for yourself. It's dated yesterday. 'Mr. Tod Brandenburg, Roosevelt, Missouri. Dear Tod: ("I think he's got his nerve, under the circumstances,") I regret to say that I feel that I must drop my membership in the Rotary Club, and I wish herewith to withdraw my name from the list. My trade has been suffering each week by me being absent on Thursday noons for the regular dinner, and I have come to feel that the comparatively large expense entailed does not offer adequate returns to justify me in remaining a member. Yours very truly, Horace Seidensticker.'"

A ruminative preoccupation with personal matters had spread itself over the assembled Rotarians as the

chairman read the letter, and they hardly seemed to notice that he had finished reading its contents.

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“Ben” Howard, the attorney, turned and nodded to “Howard” Winkelman, the furniture man. “He told me he was going to do this,” he whispered. “Howard” was non-committal in his silence, and simply nodded back. His eyes were looking elsewhere. “Phil” Albright, the banker, was figuring up in his mind what capital at six per cent the annual dues and the weekly dinners represented. The result made him serious. Judge “Laurence” Emerson was in his mind revolving what his wife had said just last night in bed on this subject, and he determined to take her some little present when he went home to supper that evening.

“I’m not surprised to see you fellows are hard struck by this letter,” continued the chairman, “which, I may say, is about as poor an excuse of a letter as I’ve read in many a long day. I’ve always liked Horace Seidensticker, but I’m sorry to say now that Rotary evidently made a mistake when she opened her arms to take him in.” He smiled a pleased smile as he added, “If Horace Seidensticker, fellows, can get along without Rotary, Rotary can certainly manage to toddle along without him. (Applause.) And God help him! (More applause.) As I said before, we’ve got the finest bunch of business men in town, the greatest crowd of one hundred per cent Americans in Roosevelt (applause), and we represent here the greatest go-getting up-and-at-’em constructive movement in the United States today (applause), out to promote the best interests

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of the American people and the American flag, the grandest flag on earth (long applause), and if Horace Seidensticker does not feel that he wants to belong to this red-blooded he-man organization, why then, I say, God help him.” (Faint applause, as being hardly appropriate so near the name of the Deity.)

“Now to pleasanter stuff,” went on the chairman, smiling brightly. The members of Rotary did not respond as usual to his cheery manner. Eructations and other faint adumbrations of digestive trouble to come were disturbing the gentlemen. “Tom” Cuttle tiptoed over and raised a window, which was closed a moment later by “Luke” Goodman, who complained of a draught in the small of his back. Attention seemed to wander, and the chairman had to rap for order. A plate of soup had by this time been placed before each member, but the Rotarians seemed not to relish the idea, and sat with gaze averted from the liquid. Levity had died within them. They were listening to deep inward voices.

“Just a minute more, fellows,” said the smiling chairman. “I want to remind you of the dance at the golf club next Tuesday night, at which Rotary expects every member to be present... with his Rotary Ann.” He paused in jocular fashion, but the sally failed to bring forth its usual hale burst of laughter. “Remember, unless you’re dead or in jail, Rotary expects every member to be present... and if you’re locked up that night, I guess ‘Laurence’

will get you out.” He looked towards the Judge, but the Judge was leaning over “Walter” Barlow, the osteopath, and asking “Doc” Summers if he had anything along for

indigestion, to which the physician nodded. The Judge at that moment looked anything but lenient.

"Now please all rise, fellows, while 'Hank' Longson says the blessing."

There was relief in the sound as chairs rasped backwards and men drew out their feet from under the table. The Y. M. C. A. secretary, a man with a soft face bent into a perpetual smile, had entered fully into the spirit of the humorous dinner, and now raised his face with closed eyes towards the ceiling.

"O God," he said, and there was still a half smile about the corners of his mouth, "make us truly thankful for the food which we are about to receive, in Jesus' name, Amen."

There was no jolly slow procession towards the door today, with stories still being told, and re-groupings of men who had sat too far apart to say the thing they wished to say. A determined air hung over all the men with the exception of the Y. M. C. A. secretary, whose ardor for merriment no amount of indigestion could dampen. His fun today was met with silence, however, and as quickly as possible each man had rammed his hat on his head and left the hotel, walking slowly but steadily.

On Saturday night, at its regular bi-weekly meeting, the Chamber of Commerce, although its functions

had largely been taken over by the two more exclusive organizations in the town, also passed a resolution protecting the fair name of the city in the press. This was what somewhat supererogatory under the circumstances, perhaps, but such a motion was just now, as it were, the proper thing to do, and the C. of C. must not be outdone

in such matters by the gentlemen of the cogged wheel and the lion's head. The meeting was held, as usual, in the hall over the fire department of the town, a long bare chamber encumbered along one wall with spare lumber from other parts of the building. Malignant electric light bulbs hung glaring here and there on their attenuated cords down the centre of the room and did their best to ruin the eyes of the members. They lent a hard and heartless atmosphere to the apartment, cheerless at best. Some fifty men, and two women that looked and felt out of place in the assembly, sat on undertaker's chairs in disheveled rows, facing the table at the further end, where sat the presiding officer, a man with a sniff, which flared out regularly like the brief intervals of a winking lighthouse. Formerly two hundred, three hundred, members had congregated at these meetings, including the best people in the town, who now must be sought in the assemblies of Rotary and the Lions. There was a time when the very President of the University had been a regular attendant, than which no higher praise could be spoken in the city of Roosevelt, and even Mr. Albright, the bank president,

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had warmed the hearts of the company by casual attendance. Those were the balmy days gone by. Now only nobodies here congregated, men of no lodge, carpenters in a small way, grocery clerks and so forth. Once in a while somebody bigger dropped in by accident, but he soon sized up the calibre of the group, and was seen there no more. Lion Brough, the school superintendent, blushed with shame to remember that he once had been president of the Chamber in the old days. This, with the fact that he had no college degree, which

he so effectively hid, he felt, under his careful enunciation, constituted his black past, to be lived down into oblivion.

On this Saturday evening the paid Secretary of the Chamber, an efficient gentleman who had once nearly succeeded in actually bringing an overall factory to the city by his activities, sat by the chairman, and called in turn on the various committees for reports, most of whom had nothing to say, or else were unrepresented this evening by any member present. The Good Roads committee reported the Farmingville road in good shape after repeated dragging, and the Springtown road was about to be dragged. The Membership committee announced two new members, both of the gentlemen being present and trying to look as though they were not self-conscious at the speaking of their names. The farce of electing these two men into membership was then gone through, as though the Chamber would possibly turn down the chance of having their good dollar a

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month with which to carry on its activities. Unfinished Old Business, and New Business to Be Brought Before the Meeting nearly passed off the tapis unbid for, when Lion Harris, the real estate man, entered on squeaking tiptoe, and having briefly informed himself in whispers what point the meeting had reached, rose and addressed the chair. His entrance had put a momentary quietus on the proceedings, since every eye had turned towards him, and all those present had been delighted to see a man of his eminence among them once more.

“Mr. Chairman,” he announced.

“Mr. Harris,” replied the chairman, leaning forwards on his table, politely, in serious consideration of what the

gentleman was about to say, which was certain to be something of worthy import, coming from so prominent a man.

“I have a little matter which I wish to bring before the Chamber of Commerce.” The chairman bowed, and several members shifted their chairs the better to take in what Mr. Harris had to propound. “At the last meeting of the Lions,” he went on, speaking calmly, although he knew the effect of weighty secrecy that name must lend in such a company, “it was brought out that a newspaper item was going the rounds of the state papers concerning a freak colt on a farm west of Roosevelt. Now it seemed to us that such an account would do our fine little city no good, would, as a matter of fact, lend a false impression perhaps to interests considering locating here, and

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so turn away a lot of good business from Roosevelt. That’s the sort of publicity we don’t want, Mr. Chairman,” he thundered, bringing down one fist into the palm of the other hand, and lingering for a moment’s emphasis. “That’s the sort of publicity that will do us harm, not good, that’s the sort of publicity we want to stop, if possible, not encourage, and the sooner the better.” There was a ripple of applause, and some of the men present were glad that they were there to see this thing of civic efficiency in action.

“Therefore I move you, Mr. Chairman,” he went on, in a lower tone, as though the impassioned moment of his deep feeling had given way to the moment of cool collected practicality in handling the situation, “I move you that this body do now here declare itself opposed to the further publication in the local paper or in the state papers of such items, harmful to the best interests of our

fine little city.” Even before he had seated himself there were a score of secondings, and the motion was passed unanimously. The chairman thanked Mr. Harris for bringing to their attention this important matter, while one of the local carpenters whispered an unintelligible remark into that gentleman’s ear, to which he bent sidewise and listened leniently, nodding as he felt round under his chair for his hat. Even as the chairman was announcing that now Miss Louise Overpeck, the local Red Cross nurse, would tell them about her county work, Mr. Harris rose and

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tiptoed down the stairs. His going took a radiance from the hall, but its occupants realized that so important a man must have a multiplicity of interests clamoring for his attention, and they could consider themselves lucky in having claimed his presence at all that evening.

And so it was, through the happenings of those momentous meetings on Wednesday and Thursday and Saturday of that week, that the world at large knew nothing more of the prodigy west of Roosevelt. And reading nothing more on the subject, the public forgot about it. The name of the little city was no more besmirched in this matter, and the young centaur was free to grow up untrammelled by the gaze of a curious world.

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The thing was by this time more than a week old, and had grown quite steady on its legs, legs still disproportionately long, at this period of its life, to the rest of its body. The only trouble it seemed to have with

these members now arose from a growing tendency on their part to indulge in skittish waywardnesses, so that quite suddenly they would seem sometimes to fly out, of their own accord, and carry the young centaur off on a wanton gambol willy-nilly, from which it must come trotting back sedately to its mother's side.

From that same animal mother the upper portion of the strange creature's body had also gained an

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untoward maturity, as measured by human standards; so that, as we have seen, just as even when the thing was first born its little backbone and the other portions of its anatomy were imbued with a strength and a control not present to the normal child, so already now it was carrying to its mouth all sorts of objects found casually in the day's ramble about the pasture with old Belle. The neighbors would stand sometimes and laugh to see it investigate some new find, and then make a face and spit and back away from the bad taste in its mouth, and finally run crying to its mother for protection. It was a pretty sight to see the young thing step high and hold itself erect as it trotted beside old Belle, with one hand holding on her mane, every muscle beautifully coordinating with the others.

"That would have made a fine work-horse," remarked old Uncle John Urmston sagely, shaking his head at Mr. Durnan.

"It will yet," said the latter, nodding quizzically as he turned away. "You just wait." He looked at the young animal with an evaluating eye.

On Sunday, Mrs. Delacourt drove over with her husband to see the strange creature, having told Daniel at church their intention of so doing. The boy was standing

at the pasture gate waiting for them in the afternoon, and so did not take them into the house lot at all, passing down by the barn, where Mrs. Delacourt cast an appraising sidelong glance at the house. They went out on the railroad track,

and across into the lower pasture. The boy whistled a peculiar whistle, whereupon old Belle raised her head and whinnied to him down by the lower fence, and the young centaur came running part way up to meet them.

“Oh, dear!” exclaimed Mrs. Delacourt spasmodically when she first caught sight of the thing. Her fingers fell on Daniel’s sleeve and then, her husband having kept on in his walking down to examine the animal, her hand slipped down and took possession of the boy’s hand. “Will it hurt me?” she demanded. Daniel laughed nervously, more conscious of her hand-clasp than of her question.

When Mr. Delacourt had followed the creature in its retreat to its mother once more, he turned to ask Daniel some questions about the thing. His wife started forwards eagerly, as though she too wished to examine the colt, and quite naturally dropped the boy’s hand. The gesture had seemed to have nothing to do with her husband’s turning.

“It is a centaur, quite simply,” said Mr. Delacourt, speaking with his quick accent which always troubled Daniel. “Do you know what it is, a centaur, my boy?” he demanded, twinkling his eyes at Daniel. Like most people out here in the wilds, the boy was strangely baffled by the foreigner’s talk, not lending himself readily to the thought of anyone’s speaking another

tongue. He was, as it were, irritated by the strangeness, and could not sufficiently

overcome this to concentrate on what the man was actually trying to say.

He shook his head at him now. "No, sir," he said, somewhat raising his voice as though he were speaking to a deaf person.

"Dis lui ce que c'est qu'un centaure, toi. Nom de dieu, qu'il est stupide!" he said to his wife, turning once more to his examination of the animal before him.

"Daniel, don't you know what a centaur is?" asked Mrs. Delacourt quietly, looking deep into the boy's eyes.

"Oh, a centaur," repeated Daniel, kicking at a weed before him. "Yes, they used to have them in olden times, half-horse and half-man. I don't believe in them though. Do you?" He was standing beside the colt now, which allowed him alone to come near it, and his hand was resting on the creature's flank which he was stroking gently. The young thing half closed its eyes and seemed to be dozing in contentment.

"You don't?" laughed Mrs. Delacourt whimsically. "And what, pray tell, is it that you have your hand on right now, if it isn't a centaur?"

The young animal opened its eyes and looked suddenly towards the upper end of the pasture. No one of the three others had heard anything, but the acute ears of the centaur had caught the sound of the lifted gate, and Mrs. Delacourt now looking up, saw Mr.

Durnan approaching. Belle called to her colt softly, and it trotted over to-her side.

“Thought I’d just come down and see what you thought of the thing,” Mr. Durnan said, when he had come near. He was wearing his Sunday clothes, a white shirt and collar, without necktie, and black trousers and a vest, which was unbuttoned. In these Sunday clothes he appeared ill at ease, standing with arms folded, caressing with one hand the other elbow, while his right hand lay against his cheek or wandered over his chin.

“Oh, I think it’s quite wonderful, Mr. Durnan,” said Mrs. Delacourt immediately in her rich deep voice. “Don’t you?”

“Well,” replied Mr. Durnan slowly, meditatively, “I reckon he’ll make a good work horse yet. I wouldn’t have chose such a creature, and I don’t reckon as how his market value won’t be worth much, but I ain’t worryin’ about that. I guess as how the mare’s colt will bring in some returns yet.”

Mr. Delacourt merely smiled at the man, and twinkled his eyes appreciatively, having learned that, as in the case of Daniel it was out of the question his trying to make himself understood to the natives. Daniel too was silent in the presence of his father. He had long ago learned that anything he himself would wish to say would not be to the family’s liking.

“It’s very interesting,” was all that Mrs. Delacourt could think of by way of carrying on the conversation. Suddenly it was borne in upon her

sharply, what was the background of the boy in whom she had felt herself interested, and what must be the daily life of the lad with whom she had talked so easily on the hill-top while she painted the sunlight. The boy was not ashamed of his father; this she sensed immediately,

rightly interpreting his silence as acquiescence and not sullenness. Secretly she looked at the boy's features and then at his father's, but could find no trace of the older man's face in his son's dark cheeks and chin and hair. There was a depth to the boy's eyes and a warmth about his mouth which was lacking altogether in the father's face.

"What are you going to call him?" she asked the man, in further talk.

"I ain't decided yet," said Mr. Durnan, spitting to one side imperturbably, as though it were a social rite. "I ain't much on namin' things myself," he went on. "Hardly any of my animals has a name, except the mare here, and she was called Belle when I got her. My wife wants to have the thing baptized, she says, and if we do, of course I suppose it'll have to have a name. The preacher is considerin' of it."

"Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?" demanded Mr. Delacourt incredulously, hardly trusting his knowledge of the English language. Mr. Durnan looked up dumbly at this interruption, but marveled nothing. He did not comprehend what was being said in his presence, to be sure; but then anything that he could not understand could hardly be worth much, he figured, and

so he was not disturbed. On Daniel's forehead, however, there came a little wrinkle of regret, each time he heard Mr. and Mrs. Delacourt talking French in his presence. It stirred within him the desire to know this strange marvelous thing of a foreign tongue. There were so many things that he wanted to know!

After Mrs. Delacourt had confirmed her husband's understanding of the man's words, she turned to Mr.

Durnan to make her farewell. Daniel walked up through the pasture with her, while her husband walked silently on the other side.

“When did you stop school, Daniel?” she asked quietly.

“Last year,” was the boy’s dull reply.

“How far had you gone?”

“The third year of high school. I worked.”

“Why did you stop, my boy!” she said, with gentle chiding in her tone.

“He said I had to,” he went on in the same dull tone, nodding back over his shoulder towards his father.

“Wouldn’t you rather have gone on?” she asked.

“I’m going to, someday,” he said. “When I come of age, I guess.”

The woman turned quickly and looked at the face of the boy. She could not tell him that it would be out of the question then, that he would be too old.

She held his hand in hers at parting.

“Thanks so much for letting us see your centaur,” she said.

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“Thank you!” chirruped Mr. Delacourt quaintly, as he started up the engine.

Daniel turned towards the house where the family were prepared to take out of him any incipient pride that he might manifest, due to the visit of his “swell” friends. And if he did not manifest any such pride, why then that was just owing to a still greater “smart Aleck” spirit within him, and he must be so much the more browbeaten and bullied.

“I think we ought to try to do something for that boy,” said Mrs. Delacourt to her husband as they mounted the

hill in the car, towards their home.

“How do you mean?” he demanded.

“Give him some work, let him go to high school this winter,” she replied. “He says his father has forbidden him to go.”

“How is he going to do it, then?” Mrs. Delacourt hesitated a moment before answering.

“Oh, I thought perhaps we might give him a place to sleep up on the hill, and let him work for his food. He wouldn’t cost us anything at all, you know. He could live with us very easily.”

“I don’t see anything very brilliant about him,” said Mr. Delacourt, plunging up the last steep segment of the ascent.

Mrs. Delacourt hesitated a moment, again. “No; you wouldn’t,” was all that she said. To which, obviously, there was no reply.

II

BY the early part of September the young centaur was well along in his ability to talk. The first thing he had learned to say, I regret to relate, was "God damn you!" picked up from much iteration on the part of the male members of the Durnan family. He had heard the phrase, repeatedly, both at morning, when the cows were driven up to be milked and when they were driven down, and at evening, when the same process was gone, through again. So it came that, as he was darting across the pasture early one dawn, in swift pursuit of a rabbit, which had lingered near for a moment, thinking him only a horse, he came out roundly with the oath, and was himself so surprised that he stopped and laughed and forgot the rabbit. He chortled the phrase over softly, in full contentment, several times, as he trotted back to where his mother was feeding. And there he repeated it once more. Old Belle raised up her head and looked at him. She sighed a deep sigh. Accustomed to the words, she began walking up towards the gate, thinking that once more she was being called back to work.

He still felt himself nothing alien to the old mare who had bred him. He was content to wander all the

day about the field by her side, and to linger near as she cropped the grass during the night under the stars. He would stray away sometimes to some further corner of the pasture, or go over to play with another colt, foaled about the same time as himself. From him it was that he learned to kick. They would race together madly, and

then discover suddenly how far away they were from the older animals, and would stop and cry aloud, each in its own accents, and then swerve away to their mothers, only to come together a moment later for another game. The young centaur would catch hold of the mane of its young companion and pull with all its might, while the young colt would strive to catch the white flesh of the other with its teeth. Thus they would whirl and bend about, kicking up the dust, and sometimes striking out bravely with hind hoofs, which hurt when they landed home. The centaur liked this new experience, and for a while went about wantonly kicking, merely for the joy of it. One mule in the enclosure gave him a taste of his own medicine, bringing forth agonizing cries from the infant, which sent Belle careering up, with ears pricked, to see what the trouble was. The centaur laid his arms on her neck, and bent his head to weep bitterly, reaching back sometimes with one stubby short arm to rub the injured place on his left flank. A little later, he was once more playing with his companion. But he was more chary of his kicks.

And still there was no name for the thing. He had

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not been baptized after all, for the Reverend Mr. Holcomb had finally declared the animal to be less than half human.

"Any fool can see that," he said, looking at the creature with his heavy eyes, while Mr. Durnan and two neighbors stood by and listened. "You measure down from the top of his head to the place where the brown hair begins, and then you measure from there the rest of his body, and see what you get," went on the gentleman in clerical black, contemptuously.

Mr. Durnan spat. "I guess you're right, all right, Reverend," he said slowly, and each of the neighbors spat in turn also.

"He's less than half human," spoke Mr. Holcomb, driving home his point.

"What do you reckon the cause of it was, Reverend?" demanded one of the men, holding both elbows as though there was danger of their falling apart. He was a thin red-faced man, with an Adam's apple possessed of an abnormal range of movement, so that little children stood and watched it as it went about its travels. The skin on the man's neck looked like that of a chicken freshly plucked, behind which the Adam's apple was like a most mobile sternum.

"I'll tell you," replied the clergyman, after a single moment's doubt for an answer, "we all got to suffer for our sins. Wars and rumors of wars, earthquakes, fires, and the storms we been a-havin', all show it. The elements is disturbed, I tell you, and until we repent of our sins, we're goin' to have

strange things goin' on." He paused and looked at his three listeners, who vouchsafed nothing but a nod in reply.

"I was talking to old Uncle John Urmston the other day, and he says he's been livin' in these parts since five years before the War of the Rebellion, and he ain't never *seen* such a spring as we had this year. I tell you," he went on, raising his voice, "the elements is disturbed, that's what they are. That's the reason why we got progidies like this here one, progidies that hadn't ought to be. If it hadn't been for that there Daniel Durnan runnin' off to strange gods in unholy churches, and

gettin' infernal knowledge into his head at the godless schools in the town, there never would have been nothin' like this in our midst. That's the reason why we been struck by the hand of God in this here a fashion, I tell you."

The second neighbor, a short squat man with a watery moustache, instanced his apple crop this year as a case in point, and the first neighbor offered evidence of one very late lamb to back up the contention of the minister. Mr. Durnan himself believed in the theory that something was seriously askew in the universe, since he had never in his life, he averred, seen so many pole-cats as there were this year.

And so, the four men, in full accord, turned towards the gate, and passed out, with the decision fully made that there would be no baptism for the young centaur. He was not sufficiently human.

Dick was the name the boys finally gave to the centaur. It was as good as any other, and Dick the animal was called henceforth, by all the young Durnans, male and female. The parents, too, fell into the use of the cognomen, when reference to the animal was necessary. The neighborhood took up the name, as well; and thus, although there had been no formal christening in the community, Dick became an entity with a name.

He readily learned it, and soon would come running when he was called. He would stop a little way off and gaze with proud eyes straight at the person who had hailed him, hands lightly poised akimbo. If there was a piece of sugar or of bread and butter held out to him, he would come forward on hesitant feet, halting every few moments with hoofs firm set, ready to dash away at the

slightest motion. Slowly advancing he would at last take the proffered gift, and if his hand touched yours there was a curious sensation of a rough woodland hide. Then he would wheel and trot away, crunching the sugar between his teeth, with smacking lips, or else contentedly putting down the bread and butter in great gulps. His mouth was very wide, and looked as though it could have taken in a whole slice at a time. He was beginning to carry himself magnificently as he moved about the field, with an easy grace that escaped all Durnan eyes except those of Daniel. The boy would lie for long periods sometimes on Saturday afternoons or on Sundays or in moonlit evenings, watching

the rhythm of the young centaur's body in movement.

Now began, too, that curious low crooning song which Dick would hum endlessly as he moved along. It had an almost subterranean tone to it, very deep and vibrant, despite the fact that it was still infantile and had not yet taken on that booming bass quality which afterwards it had, so terrifying to strangers in the night time. There were words to it, too, but these were incomprehensible babblings apparently, since no one was able to make them out. There seemed sometimes to be a marked swing to them, like swiftly flowing verses of some kind, although at other times they had only the slow monotonous steady sound of a madman's language. The sound was hardly audible by day unless you were quite close to the animal, but at night the family had trouble at first in sleeping, and once or twice Mr. Durnan got up and went down to the pasture, to drive old Belle and her colt down into the woods at the lower corner. These were some of the occasions on which Dick gained

more intimate acquaintance with his first spoken words. For a quarter of an hour the sound was heard no more. Then it started up again, sounding like a voice out of a cave, or as though Mount Liberty itself had taken to vibrating a clear audible note. "It's like a voice of nature," whispered Daniel to himself in his bed. "What did you say?" demanded his bed mate, his older brother. "Nothing," answered Daniel.

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"Well then, keep your mouth shut and let me sleep." And outside, the rhythmic drone kept up its hum.

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The next morning, Mrs. Durnan had news for her husband, while they were lying still in bed.

"There's another one a-comin', Jo," she said dully. She lay between Mr. Durnan on one side and Joe, the youngest on the other.

Mr. Durnan grunted in sole reply. His spirit was low within him at the best, and even these heavy tidings from his spouse could not sink him lower. For was not the hand of the Almighty raised against them, according to the word of Mr. Holcomb, and were they not suffering for their sins? Mr. Durnan thought on the wars and the rumors of wars abroad in the world, and groaned again. He could not have named them to you by name, nor have counted them over on his fingers for you; but the Reverend Holcomb had spoken of them with conviction, and with gloomy emphasis, and he was a man who knew such things intimately. Earthquakes and tempests! Mr. Durnan almost wished that such things would visit himself and wipe out all his misery. That set him to

thinking of the tornado over at Farmingville last spring. The whole family had been piled into the wagon, sitting on chairs and odd boxes, and had made hegira over to see the ruin of trees and houses and furniture left in the wake of the storm. They had even looked upon the spot where the woman was

killed. Once more Mr. Durnan ruminated on the necessity of building a storm cellar near the house, whither the family could retreat in case of such another visitation. There was another of the tasks which had been facing him, lo, these many years. Once more he groaned in spirit with the piled-up weight of his worries, and his cares too heavy to be borne, and works innumerable to be accomplished.

“That’ll make thirteen,” went on Mrs. Durnan, while the baby suckled.

Thirteen! Mr. Durnan sunk his unshaven cheek still further into the blue-striped pillow case, and wished that he could sleep and forget it all. “Was it not the very acme of all ill-fortune on this morning of his gloomy cogitations, to learn that he was going to become a father for the thirteenth time! He was not worrying over the problem of feeding and clothing the newcomer. Such things just naturally took care of themselves; and besides, it would be too long a time before they became acute, for them now to enter into the mind of Mr. Durnan. It was the fateful number itself that struck a blight upon the soul of the man, and brought him to look with an evil eye upon the future of the world. It was raining, too, dully, in a purposeless sort of way, that type of raining which promises to hold on forever, out of a low gray sky cutting off the tops of the mountains, a

lingering, clammy atmosphere that makes your clothes damp when you come to put them on in the morning.

“There’ll just have to be another one, that’s all,”

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sighed Mrs. Durnan philosophically, stirring to rise. “Thirteen’s unlucky, and you know it, and we can’t stop there. My God, who’d be a mother!”

That evil catalogue of gloomy instances proving the strange disorder of the universe, was still raging through the head of Mr. Durnan. Earthquakes, wars and the rumors of wars, pole-cats, late lambs, poor apple crop, a thirteenth baby, fires, storms, and that terrible all inclusive cause of it all, “the elements is out of joint”; and all of these things brought to one grand climax by that thing down there in the pasture, visible token of the vengeance visited upon the Durnans! What his sins were, Mr. Durnan was not sure. He cogitated. There was that man over at Farmingville, to whom he had wilfully lied about the age of the mule two years ago; but surely that did not count so woefully against him, for he had heard the Reverend Holcomb himself so far stretch a point as that... and more. No, that could hardly be the sin. He swore pretty strong; could it be that? But, hell, all the men in the community did that, except when revivals were going on, and the preacher got you to crying and going round shaking hands with everybody in the meeting house and asking them if they’d found Jesus. Of course, ordinarily, a man wouldn’t be expected to keep up that business all the time. It was like the condition a man found himself in after taking a bath, preternaturally clean, so that for a day or so he didn’t plow or do any heavy work, so as not to get all sweaty again right away.

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But there always came a day when the actualities of farm labor brought one to the necessity of ruining the work of the tub, and then one just naturally got to work again. So it was with swearing after a while. As to drinking vanilla extract; well, Mr. Holcomb did not condemn that practice, although he was strong against all consumption of corn liquor and moonshine, and had even been known to inform the Law about a man back in the hills, not one of his church members, who was found, upon investigation, to have a still in his woodshed. He had sent that man to the state prison for two years, which clearly showed what he thought on the subject of drinking. He was always violent in his pulpit denunciations of such practices. But vanilla extract was another matter, and was not against the law. The Constitution said nothing about vanilla extract. The store on the corner, which the Reverend Holcomb owned but did not operate, trafficked heavily in such matters, and always drove a busy trade in vanilla extract. There was a heap of the discarded thin little flat bottles behind the store, and they could be seen along every road, and near the entrance to every farm house they were discernible, used and flung aside the last thing by farmers driving home at night. Surely so universal a practice was not the sin for which he was now burdened. And besides, as he had repeatedly told himself before, the Reverend Holcomb had never a word against the practice.

Mr. Durnan sighed, and, yawning vastly, sat up

on the side of the bed, to stretch, and then to draw on his trousers and his shoes, dropped the night before as he sat in the same place. He did not understand this life, Mr. Durnan told himself. It was a hard, hard world. Then he

went out to chop some wood for Mrs. Durnan, a difficult matter on so wet a morning as this. Rain or shine, winter or summer, this was his invariable practice. It would have been easier, one would have thought, to prepare such material the night before; but Mr. Durnan had never brought himself to it, on the principle, it must be supposed, that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. The house, during the night, for instance, might bum down, and then his labor of preparing the wood would be useless. Or he might die in the night-time, and then, in the morning, the work of gathering the fuel would fall upon someone else.

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Two days later, Mr. Durnan had come to his conclusion. He would suffer for his sins. Although the word “expiation” was unknown to his vocabulary, the conception was dimly present in his mind, and he was wondering if, by showing to the Lord Almighty that he was sorry for his sins, whatever they might be, he might not win respite from his punishment. So this morning he planned to enter upon a new mode of procedure. “We’re goin’ to git in that corn today,” he announced

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as he sucked in his coffee at breakfast. “Ben, you go down and git Belle up.”

The family held its breath for a moment. This was the first time Belle had been requisitioned since the arrival of the centaur in the spring. It had been a hardship to get along without the use of the old mare, to be sure, and there had been at no time any discussion of such an abstention from her services, but the family had

somehow drifted into the practice, and it came as a distinct shock now to consider putting her once more into harness.

“What’ll we do with Dick?” queried Ben, wiping his plate with his last morsel of bread. “You can’t have him up there where everybody goin’ along the road’ll see him.”

“You bring him up, along of Belle,” replied Mr. Durnan, rising and waving a reproving hand at his first-born. “I’ll tend to the people goin’ along the road. Don’t you never mind about them.” So saying, he looked into his pipe, and lit it without putting in any fresh tobacco.

“It’ll look funny as hell,” remarked Ben in disgust as he rose from the breakfast table, letting his chair topple over backwards. He strode out without lifting the piece of furniture.

“You carry them dishes out, May, and you and Lucy wash’em. And don’t drop none of ’em, now, you hear me?” said Mrs. Durnan, removing Joe, the youngest, from her own lap to the knees of Carry. Jim and Sally, the two oldest girls, had already departed

for town, where they were working in the malodorous purlieus of the canning factory across from the cemetery, where tomatoes by the ton were being tucked away into tin receptacles. They would not be home until dark. Daniel, too, was already off to his work in town, carrying with him two bacon sandwiches and an apple for his lunch. He was helping on a house the other side of the viaduct, near the mayor’s home, where a contractor was putting up three bungalows with all modern improvements, including the ubiquitous squat-columned porch, with its roof supported by truncated pyramids,

architecturally in the style of the Aztecs. South-western Missouri seems to run naturally to this structural mode.

When Ben led up the old mare that morning, Dick, the centaur, for the first time left the pasture in which he had been foaled. He stayed close beside the form of his dam, holding by her mane, and looking over her shoulder at the boy.

"Come on, God damn you!" said Ben to the animal as he mounted the slope towards the gate.

"God damn you, yourself!" repeated the young centaur, almost like a parrot, as though he were not thinking what he was saying.

"Shut your mouth," replied the young man.

"Shut your own mouth," came forth the prompt retort from the horse-child. From which it will be seen that he had waxed in his use of the English language.

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The colt proved quickly adaptive to the new order of things, and while old Belle stood to the harnessing, he wandered curiously about the barn, prying into corners, investigating cribs, poking his head into windows. When an automobile passed by, he scurried behind the barn, and only from that safe retreat put forth his head to watch the vehicle. He knew the sound of these things from afar, and had seen them flying by at a distance. Stooping, he caught up a rock from the ground, and hurled it at a flock of chickens in the farmyard, laughing to see them scatter in a flurry of squawks and fluttering wings. He had learned the trick of throwing stones by watching the young Durnans. Already he could out-throw Guy, aged ten. He was rather terrified when Belle, hitched alongside of Mary, began trundling behind her the rattling concern of the wagon. Ben laughed at a great

rate to see the consternation of the young centaur, who stood transfixed, fearful to approach the lumbering contraption that was following his mother, and yet not wishing to let her get far away from him. He cried out, whereupon Belle turned her head and called to him, and Dick approached to her side, although giving a wide berth to the wheels of the wagon.

As they were entering the field to the east of the house, that field in which had been tried the ill-starred experiment in drainage, which had proved to Mr. Durnan indisputably that all this here talk about draining was a delusion and a snare, a Ford

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passed along the road, and its occupants looked in. The car bore an Oklahoma license tag. The man leaning on the wheel wore an ancient broad-brimmed hat, with high dull-pointed crown. This being Wednesday, he was three days unshaven. Over his overalls he wore a ragged coat, of the same weathered golden brown as the hat, beautiful if you had an eye for such things. Beside him sat his wife, elegantly arrayed in a pink silk mob cap with lace border, admirably keeping the wind from blowing stray locks. On the back seat sat Grandma, also in a mob cap, blue, and Grandpa, “who was showing his perfect ease and adaptation to the motor car by sitting as far forward on the seat as possible, and leaning with one visibly displayed arm along the side of the car.

“Of all things!” exclaimed the pink mob cap as the car topped the rise by the Durnan house. “Look a-there, Ma.”

“Where?” said Ma, rousing herself.

“There in that there field where the men is,” pointed the pink cap. “Don’t you see the funny colt!”

The driver cast a hasty glance, and then turned to more important things. Grandpa also turned his head in passing, but the car had whirled him on to pastures new, and the rear glass was dim and demanded a painful screwing of the back. Grandma laughed once, and then sank back once more.

“Well, I never!” exclaimed the pink cap. “Funny what things they have over here, ain’t it?”

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Then a truck from town passed, and the driver waved to Ben as usual, and glanced at the centaur almost as though it might have been any other horse. He too was concerned with weightier matters. The slow-moving mountain of a load of baled hay came along, and the owner, perched before his wares, had good opportunity in passing, to examine at his leisure the young creature. He yelled some witticism, which was strangled by the creaking of his own wagon, and Mr. Durnan, recognizing his neighbor, waved a hand and nodded, just as though he had heard and appreciated the words of the man.

Mr. Whittaker, from the big yellow house down the road, stopped in his buggy, and was humorous.

“How much will you take for the colt, Jo?” he demanded, grinning at his own sense of fun.

“More’n you’ll put up, Herb!” came back Mr. Durnan promptly, equal to the situation when it came to repartee. Both men laughed.

“Oh, I don’t know, Jo,” continued the man in the buggy. “I’d offer you ten cents for it any day.”

“You’re gittin’ generous, Herb, ain’t you!” shouted back Mr. Durnan, with an air of finality, turning to give a command to Guy. This was a mean rap at Mr. Whittaker’s parsimonious reputation.

“Well, the damn thing ain’t worth any more than that!” was the latter gentleman’s parting shot, as he gathered up the reins and prepared to move.

The centaur was standing listening seriously to all this, in front of his mother, and his eyes were big and round. In after years he always said that this

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was the first thing he could remember. Oddly enough, it was also the first occasion on which he had been even dimly conscious of the dual nature of his being. For in his present perturbed misery of spirit, he could not decide which to turn to for consolation, to Belle, his animal mother, or to Mr. Durnan, the principal human being present, who, like himself, could talk and understand. Somehow, Belle seemed to him this morning inadequate, and he shook his head and stamped his fore hoof and trotted away from her. But the Durnans, father and son, seemed to him equally unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, he turned in their direction, and for the first time joined hesitantly in their occupation of gathering the ears of June corn from the stalks.

“Look at Dick!” exclaimed Guy after a moment. “He’s helpin’ with the work.”

Mr. Durnan and Ben turned both to see, but the centaur had heard the boy’s cry, and now, in embarrassment, he dropped the ears of corn he had been holding, and looked from one to the other to see how they would take his joining in.

“Go on, Dick,” said Mr. Durnan reassuringly, “that’s right. Keep it up, Dick. Good boy.” Then he turned upon his offspring. “You durned little fool, you! What’d you want to scare him that way for? You rummy! You didn’t have to yell, did you!”

“Put’m in the wagon, Dick,” said Ben, softened by the prospect of lightened labor for the future. “Look, put’m in here.”

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The young centaur’s face did not lighten with intelligence as the boy spoke. It seemed almost a mask with wide flat eyes and short rounded nose above a large mouth, as he watched the boy’s action, but he did stoop finally, and gather up the ears which he had let fall, and deposited them in the bed of the wagon.

“That’s right,” said Ben. “Now keep it up.”

What with his defence of the colt against the aspersions of Mr. Whittaker, and the centaur’s joining in with the morning’s work, although but slightly, Mr. Durnan was by this time not feeling so disconsolate. He was, as a matter of fact, feeling a warmer affection for the young creature than had ever before stirred him; there was present in the atmosphere a greater solidarity of interest than had been true since the thing was foaled in the spring.

“It’ll be kind o’ nice when he grows up,” remarked Ben to his father, not looking towards the centaur as he spoke. The animal heard the words, however, and looked self-conscious as he deposited three or four ears in the wagon.

Meanwhile, other cars and wagons and trucks and buggies were passing along the road, and from these there was a momentary craning of necks and the sound of spoken words. Generally, also, there was the sound of laughter, with now and then a shouted fleeting jocularly. But to it all the Durnans were deaf and blind. For had they not that morning gained their first vision of the fine thing it was some

day to be, to have this double worker in their midst! Truly their ugly duckling would be a silver swan. Let the rabble mock and the scoffers cry their empty pleasantries. One day theirs would be a different vanity. Even now, the more forward-looking of the passersby had a sobering reflection as they glimpsed the form of the centaur bent in labor with the others. He was weak and spasmodic as yet, erratic in his application to the duty before them, and they let this coltishness most of the morning go unchastened. They must not strain him, they knew; better let him just sort of ease along until he got his growth, Mr. Durnan explained to Ben.

That afternoon he helped again, and again the next morning he was out with them in the field. By this time, the neighbors were accustomed to the sight of the creature in their midst, and his appearance no longer called for comment. Most of the vehicles along the road bore passengers more or less regular in their goings and comings, a well-established clientele of this highway, as it were, so that by Saturday night the whole countryside was thoroughly inured to the spectacle at the Durnan house, and only an interloping group from somewhere beyond could be heard to exclaim in passing, or be seen to point a hortatory finger in their direction. But never, never, was a flying automobile known to stop in its mad course and allow its occupants to examine more closely the strange creature or inquire into its origin. For Fords and their kin have other and more important

matters to attend to, which brook no delay.

On the following Sunday afternoon, the Reverend Mr. Holcomb paid to the Durnan family a “postolic” visit, as it is known locally, arriving about half-past three, just when Mr. Durnan was rolling over for the second installment of his regular sabbatical nap. Mrs. Durnan saw the minister turning in at the gate, and in great perturbation sounded a subdued alarm.

“Jo! Git up and slick up your hair, here comes the Reverend. Quick!” she sibilated to her recumbent spouse, on the bed in the corner of the front room. “Jim, you change the baby’s dress in the back room, now! An’be quick about it! Sally, you look a sight. Ain’t you got no common sense o’ decency! Wash your face! May, run and fetch in the boys. Quick now! Why, howdy!” she said as she turned towards the porch where could be heard the heavy foot of the preacher approaching. “Come right in, Reverend, and have a seat.” She spoke with due sense of solemnity and reverence, with eyes on the floor, and face properly filled with a sense of worry, burdened with the consciousness of the wickedness of the world. Her husband had roused himself yawning from the bed, and carried his shoes with him into the kitchen. He entered, a moment later, shod and slicked of hair, and gave the minister a “Howdy.” Mr. Holcomb had seated himself in

the best rocking chair in the room, where he was silently indulging in a heavy motion back and forth on the rockers. He nodded and grunted, as he had done to Mrs. Durnan, containing all his holiness within him, as it

were, until the real business of his social call should begin.

There was heard the scuffle and scrambling of many children on the back steps, as the young Durnans were marshalled into the kitchen, and hushed, and made ready for the afternoon's activities. They were not averse to this thing, for it meant an entertainment well worth the sacrifice of other pleasures, as they knew from previous experience. Ben slouched into the room and stood leaning against one door jamb. Ray and Tom came in together and sat on the edge of the parents' bed. Then came the girls, and the two youngest boys. The room was filled with Durnans, ranged like some vision of Dante, about the central figure of the minister, a pivot stout enough, surely, to swing a whole community.

He sat pulling his lower lip, until finally the only sound in the room was the faint gulping click as his lip flapped back into position each time. Then he raised his eyes and glanced about the faces.

"Where's Daniel?" he demanded, darkening his brow.

There was a moment's uneasy silence, while Mr. Durnan tilted back on the hind legs of his chair, and examined the floor studiously, and Mrs. Durnan looked round on her offspring as though she had not

before seen that her second son was absent. Jim noticed the three parallel wrinkles running horizontally in the forehead of her mother, and raised her hand to her own brow, wondering if she too were getting so ugly a disfigurement to her fair skin.

"Why, I don't rightly know, Reverend," said the mother, sighing, and trying at the same time to indicate

to Sally to make Lucy put her feet down from off the bed, her skirts was up.

“Well, I know!” thundered the minister, suddenly sitting up in his chair, so that the children were startled, and regarded him with round staring eyes. “And the gates of hell is yawning for him wide unless he repents of his sins and comes once more to the one and only Postolic Church of Holiness, Amen! And prostrates hisself among the saints of the Lord to glory everlasting. He’s trotting with that woman up on the hill, as is old enough to be his mother, that’s what he’s a-doin’. He’s sacrileging the Sabbath day with the wickedness of the devil, that’s what he’s doin’. And verily, verily, I say unto you, right here and now, that unless he comes once more into the blessed Postolic bonds, and comes quick, too, he and all of hisn is in danger of hell’s fires and the gnashing of teeth.”

The reverend gentleman had caught his stride by this time, and the Durnans were all getting their money’s worth, a fullness of those special thrills and shudders which only the words of Mr. Holcomb could give them. Mrs. Durnan was weeping into her apron

and shaking her head. Ben shifted from one foot to the other, and brought round one hand from behind him to wipe his nose.

“I come over here this afternoon to the glory of God,” went on the irate minister, “and here I find a family as is allowing one of their boys to wander off into foreign ways, when he had ought to be stopped. I’d of thought, Brother Durnan, as, after the punishment you have received from the hand of the Lord,” he said

impressively to the head of the family, “as you wouldn’t have craved no more.”

Mr. Durnan, thus adjured, dropped down the feet of his chair slowly. He knew that the minister meant nothing personal in this chastisement of the family, but was merely fulfilling his peculiar function in their midst. As a matter of fact, the whole family was rather proud of the present visitation, knowing that for weeks they would shine in the community as having had a “postolic” call on that particular Sunday.

“Let us sing,” said Mr. Holcomb, and forthwith, after a moment’s hesitation to choose an effective hymn, he started off the singing, with a stertorous tone that was audible down beyond the cross-roads store.

You fashion-loving Christian,
You will surely be denied,
You must unload, you must unload.
You’re robbing God’s own treasury
To feed your selfish pride;
You must, you must unload.

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Chorus

The way is straight and narrow
And but few are in the road;
My brother and my sisters there is no other mode,
If you want to make heaven your future abode,
You must, you must unload.

You puffer of the cigarette,
You've made your fate secure,
You must unload, you must unload.
There'll be no more tobacco,
In the land where all is pure,
You must, you must unload.

Voice production, in this section of Missouri, is more a matter of quantity than of quality, and he that sings loudest is most acceptable in the sight of the Lord, according to local practice. Mr. Holcomb's throat was gripped tight with the ardor of his singing, and as he sang, he rocked, while his voice swooped up and down the notes of the tune like a trombone player. From time to time he bent an evil eye on some young Durnan who was, in his opinion, not making sufficient noise, and then waved a finger with strict and vehement gesture, to indicate the beat.

You whiskey-drinking Christian,
We are praying for you now,
You must unload, you must unload.
No drunkard enters heaven,
'Tis a land where all is pure,
You must, you must unload.

You money-loving Christian,
You refuse to pay your share,
You must unload, you must unload.
You want to get to heaven
On the cheapest kind of fare,
You must, you must unload.

The children vied with one another to see who could scream the loudest. Mrs. Durnan came in with a pale and uncertain second, but the boys and Mr. Durnan were content to sing the air an octave lower. Ray, aged thirteen, whose voice had not yet changed, tried to appear older by wilfully singing the low notes. He kept his eye on Ben, whose deep voice was just at present his ideal.

You Christians with card-parties,
You are far from being true,
You must unload, you must unload.
There'll be no playing euchre
In the land where all is pure,
You must, you must unload.

You opera-going Christians,
You are far from being pure,
You must unload, you must unload.
There'll be no moving pictures
In that home where all is pure,
You must, you must unload.

High notes at the beginnings of lines were the especial favorites with Mr. Holcomb, for on these he

could blare out with extra gusto, vociferating his

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praise of the Lord with clarion calls that in their loud nasal strength, he knew, were piercing into the very hills beyond the railroad track. The spirit of the man seemed lifted up, at these times, and his eyes would grow brighter, and his actions would take on a sudden energy of motion that was almost orgiastic. He fairly rammed his notes into the air, shoved them forwards from his iron mouth.

“That’s fine!” the minister gloried at the end of the first hymn. “Now for another.” And forthwith, having passed around booklets, and having designated page twenty-three, he plunged into the shouting torrents of sound.

One of these nights about twelve o’clock,
This old world is going to reel and rock,
Sinners are going to tremble and cry for pain,
For the Lord is going to come in His aeroplane.

Chorus

Ho, ye thirsty of every tribe,
Get your tickets for an aeroplane ride,
Jesus, our Saviour, is coming to reign,
And He will take us up to glory in His heavenly aeroplane.

Talk about your joy-rides in automobiles,
Talk about your fast time and motor wheels,
But we will break all records as we upward fly
In an aeroplane joy-ride through the sky.

The room rocked with the volume of sound. The Durnans were all swathed with vehemence. Their

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spirits were swelling within them, and even Mr. Durnan began to sing with greater insistence. "Sing!" shouted Mr. Holcomb in the rhythm of the words. And the Durnans sang.

There will be no punctures or muddy roads,
No broken axles from an overload,
No sparks to trouble or cause delay,
As we soar to rapture up the milky way.

If you want to get ready for to take this ride,
You must quit all your sin and humble your pride,
You must furnish a light both bright and clean,
And a vessel of oil for to run the machine.

When our journey is over and we all sit down
At the marriage supper with our harp and crown,
We will blend our voices with the heavenly throng,
And we will praise our Saviour as the years roll on.

At the hymn's end Mr. Holcomb wiped his hands and his forehead, and passed his blue handkerchief around the sweaty inside of his collar. He was in a glow of righteousness, and felt lenient towards his present parishoners.

"I was glad to see, Brother Durnan," he said, as he wielded his bandanna, "that you wasn't afraid to show forth to the world this week the punishment which the Lord has been pleased to send upon you." And when he

saw that Mr. Durnan did not know to what he referred, he continued. "I mean about that there colt of yours."

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Having spat, Mr. Durnan returned to his chair and nodded. "I been a-workin' of him a little this week," he agreed.

"Yes, and more than that, you haven't been ashamed to show him to the world," continued the preacher. "That's what I was referrin' to in particular."

These were sweet words to the ears of Mr. Durnan, coming from the mouth of the preacher; for it is good, after much dispraise, to hear words of commendation for one's virtue. Besides, in the background of Mr. Durnan's consciousness was the thought of the years before him, in which the labor of the young animal would lighten his worries. He leaned back against the wall and nodded his head meditatively.

"It's a good confession of your sins," continued the preacher, in the self-righteous voice that he reserved for sermonizings, either formal or, as on this occasion, social, far different from the tones in which he, at other times, ordered a loaf of bread or pointed out the good points of a horse to a prospective buyer.

"It's pleasant in the sight of the Lord to be humble and come out and say to the people as you have done this or that and are sorry for it. The Lord likes to see you are not ashamed of the burdens He has placed upon you. Them godless heretics up there on the hill tries to say as how Heaven ain't so near as us Postolic Brethren knows it to be. Oh, my friends, Heaven is only three miles up, and God can look

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down and see what we're, a-doin' constantly, just as you might look down through a hole in the floor of the garret here, up under your roof. An' He's pleased, Brother Durnan, with your humble spirit in lettin' the people as goes by here *see* that you ain't ashamed of this visitation of God's punishment." By the time he had reached this point, the voice of the holy man had swung into that regular rhythmic rise and fall that was the chief characteristic of his pulpit manner. At a distance its marked crescendos and sudden diminuendos, its cadenced periods, took on an air of great combers rolling in on a shore from the sea of limitless borders. If you were still further away, you perceived, as it were, only the rare mountain peaks of his enthusiasm, emerging like islands from the depths of silence, submerged by the distance.

"And now, Brother Durnan," he concluded, "if you'll just get holt of that sorrowful sinner of yourn, that wandering son, who is straying like lost sheep, wallowing like a Profligate Son, in the sin and corruption and the husks of damnation with that scarlet woman back there in the hills... if you'll just get holt of him and bring him back to redemption and the arms of the Holy Postolic Faith, the only church on earth as is acceptable in the sight of the Lord, why then you will have done a good work, and God will make his face to shine upon you, making you to prosper and to thrive in all things. Amen "

This last touch it was that confirmed Mr. Durnan

in a project that had been shaping itself in his mind during the latter part of the minister's talk. He was going to town tomorrow in the wagon, and had been wondering

what horses he should use. Prince was lame in one hoof. He would take Belle. And the colt should go along! If it was good that he should show himself to the eyes of men in his own field, with the animal beside him, why, it was still better that he should go bravely into town, into the very Square itself, and there display the strange fate that had been his in the breeding of this creature. If God liked such displays... and surely the Reverend Holcomb knew what he was talking about in such matters... and was willing to shower the blessings of prosperity on the man who thus walked abroad in the ways of the world glorying in his misfortune, he was nothing loath thus to court financial gain at the hands of the Almighty.

So it was that Mr. Durnan was somewhat preoccupied during the end of Mr. Holcomb's words, and seemed in a deep study as he accompanied the preacher to the front step, surrounded by his numerous progeny.

"I'll do everything I can," he assured the minister, solemnly, once more. It was all mysterious to him, but then, it promised to be a profitable form of enterprise, and he found within him a new sense of importance to be thus so intimately associated with the affairs of the Universe.

"Git off'n that there bed," he remonstrated with

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Ben when he turned from the door. "I'm goin' to lay down again." He dropped off his shoes and yawned. But Mr. Durnan could no more sleep that afternoon, for thinking of the prosperity that was to be his for doing the will of the Lord.

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True it was, as Mr. Holcomb had, in his picturesque fashion, declared, that Daniel was at that very moment up on the hill with Mrs. Delacourt. It was one of those ripe September afternoons, the middle of the month, with a tender blue sky, unflecked, and also, a tender blue depth in the shadows over the whole landscape. Far off to the south somewhere a forest fire was evidently burning, and its smoke, visible only as lending this vaporous shadow to the hollows of the hills, lent also a delicately pungent perfume to the atmosphere, so that the whole afternoon was scented.

The woman had brought out her painting paraphernalia with her, as usual, but her eyes were but casually fixed upon the work before her. Nearby, cast negligently down upon the flat of his back, so that he was gazing straight up into the blue, Daniel was playing with a stalk of grass between his teeth. His hat was off, and the breeze moved the firm black swerving locks of his hair over his forehead from time to time, until he put them back.

"I'd like to paint your picture sometime, Daniel," she was saying, as she poised her brush on her

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palette and looked at the boy languidly. "Only... I'd like you to wear those nice old overalls of yours, that you had on, that first day you came up here. Remember?"

The boy nodded, as he lay, silently. She hesitated a moment, and then looked off to her subject, the hills to the southwest, with the sunlight getting round behind them.

"You look better in them, you know, than you do in your Sunday clothes." She laughed as she said it. "I like you better in them, somehow, at any rate."

“Mrs. Delacourt,” replied the boy, rolling over, and resting his chin on his poised fists, “how do you suppose I’d better tackle the subject with my father, of my going to high school this winter?” The subject of his clothes and her likes on the subject, and the painting of his picture, seemed hardly to interest him.

Now that he was looking at her, the woman kept her eyes largely on the hills and on the effect that she was trying to capture.

“I don’t know, Daniel” she answered slowly. “What seems to be his objection?”

“It’s his religion,” said the boy, kicking his toes into the ground. “He don’t...”

“Doesn’t,” she insisted gently.

“He doesn’t believe in education, he says. That old Holcomb has put it into his head, you know. He says that if the Lord had meant for us to be educated, He’d have had us born that way.” The boy

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ruminated. “But that can’t be right. Because God didn’t have us born with clothes on. And I notice that Holcomb wears clothes all right.”

“Yes, praise the Lord,” laughed the woman, as she painted. The boy still was serious.

“I tried to tell him that,” continued Daniel. “But you simply can’t talk to him. He just gets mad and flies off the handle and talks about walloping me.”

“What does he want you to do; keep on working and live at home?” asked the woman.

“Yes, and go to his old church services,” said the boy contemptuously, “and sit down there for the rest of my life and just rot and never amount to nothing...”

“Anything, dear,” insisted the woman.

“Anything,” repeated the boy, flushing at the appellation, although he now was growing more accustomed to it.

“Why don’t you leave them and live somewhere else?” went on Mrs. Delacourt evenly, looking to her hills again. “Then you could work and go to high school and not be worried by such things.”

Daniel shook his head.

“I can’t do that,” he said.

“Why not?” persisted Mrs. Delacourt.

“He’d come and get me.”

“And then what?” She paused and looked at him. “What if he did? What can he do to you?”

Daniel smiled. “He used to beat me, but he don’t do that any longer...”

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“Doesn’t.”

“He doesn’t do that any more. I’m too big for him. He found that out last year when he tried it the last time.”

“Then what can he do to you?” she asked once more, shrugging her shoulders. She went back to her painting.

“It isn’t what he would do, so much,” sighed the boy, disturbed with he hardly knew what. “Oh, I don’t know. It just doesn’t seem right somehow to walk away and leave them all like that. Mom has so much to do and there’s all the kids, and everything. It just seems to me somehow that I ought to stay at home and do something for them all.”

“I know how you feel, Daniel,” spoke Mrs. Delacourt. “You just feel that you don’t want to seem to be deserting them. You have a sense of duty towards them. And I think it’s wonderful and right that you should feel that way about them. But on the other hand...”

“Oh, I know,” broke in Daniel. “I don’t seem to be able to do anything, anyway. They all of them just think that I’m sort of crazy around the house. They don’t seem to understand anything. They don’t know what I’m driving at half the time. I get so mad at the whole bunch of them, sometimes, that I just want to cut loose and run away and never see any of them any more.” The boy paused. “Mrs. Delacourt,” he went on, looking up into the woman’s face. His features were drawn and tense. “Sometimes

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it seems to me that I just hate my whole family. Hate them!”

“You poor dear boy, of course you do!” said the woman, and she put down her palette and slipped down on the grass beside him. “Of course you do, and it’s perfectly natural that sometimes you should feel that way.” The boy had dropped his face on the backs of his hands, and lay prone on the ground. She ran her fingers slowly along the short hair at the nape of his neck, and then rounded them to his cheek caressingly.

“Why don’t you come up here and live?” she said softly. “You can work, and go to school, and we will give you a nice room all of your own, and you’ll be earning your own living and getting an education at the same time. There will be plenty for you to do during the winter, and then next summer you can go on with your carpentering, and next winter you can finish up at the high school. And the following year you can enter the University, and go on, right on through the four years there, just the same, and then... why then, you’ll be an educated man. Think of it! Eh?”

She had bent, as she spoke, and the last words were almost whispered into the ear of the boy, still lying on the ground, so that she felt the warmth of his neck and cheek as she finished speaking.

“What do you say?” she asked again softly, and her lips touched lightly the side of his neck.

“Oh, I can’t, I can’t,” he burst forth, raising his

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hot cheeks from the ground. He was filled with a strange fluttering desire to cry and to bury his face on the knees of this woman. Her kindness hurt him somehow, and his throat was aching with pent-up emotion. It was wonderful to have her so much interested in him, so concerned about his future, so tender with him; but also, he was uneasy in her presence, all of a sudden, and he wished that they had not begun to talk on the subject. What he was feeling at that moment was oddly like the smell of the forest fire that was in the air all about them, terrible but sweet.

“I just can’t fly off that way,” he went on feverishly, “and live wonderfully up here, and have books and music and everything. It wouldn’t be right, and the rest of them squatting down there in that tumble-down house, without anything. It wouldn’t be right.”

“But Daniel,” she remonstrated with him gently, “what are you going to do? You can’t carry the whole family with you on your shoulders, you know. The break is going to have to come some day, if you’re going ever to amount to anything. It’s too bad, but it’s true. You’re like a bird that is leaving the nest and going your own way. If they won’t join you in the new way, why, then they will have to be left to follow their own choice. You see that.”

“Sometimes I feel, Mrs. Delacourt,” said the boy seriously, “that I’d like to take a club and knock people on the head and make them do what is right.”

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The woman laughed softly and leaned forward impulsively to lay a hand on the boy’s knee, which she caressed for a second. “Of course you would, you dear child. But it can’t be done, so we just have to let them go their own foolish ways. Do you know Shelley?”

The boy shook his head.

“You must read him this winter,” she said. “And how you’ll love him! That’s one of the things you could do up here, you see, in the long evenings around the fire, with a big chair and a good lamp.” Her eyes were fixed on the boy’s face, watching for the effect of her words.

“Would you let me work for you, and live at home, and go to high school?” he said. “I could come up here every afternoon, and do all the work, and then go down after dark. There’ll be only the wood and the cows and the horses to attend to. I could be up here early in the morning, too, if you wanted me to do the animals in the morning as well. Maybe then my father wouldn’t mind.”

“I don’t think it would work, Daniel,” said the woman in reply, and a shadow had come into her voice, and her face was colder as she spoke to him. “I’m afraid it would be too much for you, in the first place, and then, I think Mr. Delacourt would rather have someone living right on the place. It would be so much more convenient.” The last ascription of opinion to her husband was, be it confessed, sheer

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fabrication, and she reached to adjust a lock of hair behind her head as she said it. "Of course, if you don't want to come up, that is another matter."

"Oh, but I do!" remonstrated the boy, looking at her quickly. She had risen now and was taking up her painting things, preparatory to going in. The advantage she had taken of his feelings was a cruel one, and she knew it.

"I can't tell you how much I want to be up here this winter and go to school and do a lot of reading and hear music and everything," he went on tumultuously, his voice almost quivering with the intensity of his feeling. He did not want to hurt the woman, or let her think that he was unappreciative of her kindness... as she seemed patently to think he was. "I can't think of anything more wonderful than to do that," he added. And still she went on silently with her packing.

"Will you help me with this, Daniel, please?" she said, indicating the little folding stool. There was the calm about her of a woman who has been rebuffed in her efforts to extend a kindly courtesy. It had not at first been her intention to carry the field by this manoeuvre, but when it had so potently worked on the boy's feelings, she had succumbed to the temptation, and now a pained expression was evident in her features. Had he been a few years older, she would now have turned towards him, and it would have seemed that a tear was trembling on

her eyelashes, while she would have let him see that she could not speak a word for fear of choking. But she knew that boys did not like tears.

Daniel folded the stool, and reached for the paint box in silence, and slowly they started for the house. She was sweetly solemn and meditative, and smiled sadly at the boy as she handed the implements to him, to indicate that her silence was not moody or sullen. That slow reproachful smile hurt him worse than anything. Almost he was ready to throw over family, home, and everything else in that moment. They spoke not a single word all the way to the house.

“Take them upstairs for me, if you will, Daniel, please,” she said when they had entered the door. “The first room at the right at the head of the stairs.” She stood by the newel post watching his figure as he mounted the steps, cumbered with the awkward painting things.

Suddenly she too started up the stairs, and caught him just as he was about to descend.

“Just a moment, Daniel,” she said, pushing him gently back. “I want to show you a room here at the left.” She had taken him by the hand as she passed him, and now led him to a door, which she opened and entered. A small room, simply furnished, with a bed and a table, a dresser and two chairs, was displayed. On the wall were the three oil sketches that she had done herself, in the neighboring hills. The window was open, and the wind was blowing the

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white curtains, which looked fresh with their starched ruffles.

She turned and looked at him.

“What do you think of it?” she said.

The boy was stupefied with the cleanliness and the delicacy of the place. The even smoothness of the bed was incredible, the first bed that he had ever seen which

did not sag in the middle, and it was as white and spotless as a young girl's dress on Sunday. The room looked hardly comfortable to him in its purity.

"It's fine," he commented weakly, without enthusiasm.

"Don't you like it?" she went on, smiling now for the first time. "It was going to be your room, you know, only now you say you won't come and live with us, and so all my work has been useless." She sighed and went over to straighten the runner on the dresser, which had lifted and turned back a corner with the wind. Then she sat on one corner of the bed, leaning back on straight arms and looking quizzically at the boy. "You see what a great disappointment you are, Daniel. A great disappointment!"

"It's a beautiful room," was all that the poor lad found to say, as he glanced at the pink and white wall paper and the shaded electric light bulb hanging in the centre of the room.

"Yes, it would have been a nice place for you to live and read and study in this winter," she said,

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loosening her hat and throwing it over on to the table. She ran her fingers through her hair.

"I guess I'll have to be going now, Mrs. Delacourt, it's getting pretty late," the boy stammered, turning toward the door. He was ill at ease in all this, that seemed to him luxury; more disconcerted than he had been out there on the hillside.

"Oh, must you go, Daniel?" she said, as she rose, and her hand trembled as she held it out for the boy to take. "Good-bye, then. Think over what we've been talking about."

“Yes ma’am,” he answered, falling back into the attitude he held towards school teachers, and clerks in stores on the Square in town, and other ladies far removed from his ordinary run of experience. The bond between them was snapped, and the free converse that they had known only a quarter of an hour before was now unthinkable, it seemed never to have existed.

The woman watched him go down the stairs.

“Good-bye, Daniel,” she called to him as he went out the front door.

“Good-bye, Mrs. Delacourt,” he said seriously, and then turning ran hurriedly down the hill.

She raised the back of her hand to her forehead, and turning into the room where they had just been talking, she threw herself down on the bed and wept hysterically for a moment. Then she roused herself, dried her eyes, and said “Damn!” She blew her

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nose, and having closed the window and drawn the shades, she left the room.

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Daniel ran until he reached the fence, where he let himself through between the barbed wire, careful not to snag his clothes. Then, through the virgin oak woods which lay all down the hillside he made his way more slowly, for there was no path. Leaves of past years lay dry and rotting in hollows where the wind could not rout them, and here and there a great fallen tree trunk was also slowly disintegrating to its parent soil once more. Strident jays and the cheery impudence of a wren were the only sounds about him, except sometimes for an

automobile horn down on the highway. Occasional purple asters and some goldenrod were brilliantly bringing to its close the pageant of the summer's flowers.

The smell of distant smoke did not tend to still the tumult of contending feelings that were stirring the boy's heart. He felt, as he let himself down the steep hillside, that in all his miserable hours, he had never been so miserable. At one place he came to a little clearing, where he could look down and see the highway, with the ramshackle Durnan house beyond it, dingy in its old coats of pink paint, with the gutter of the porch roof hanging like a draped festoon, oddly rakish. The barn, despite the big advertising

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sign of the Red Cross drug store in its lee, was the most dignified thing on the place. The fences showed, even at this distance, their utter disrepair. The very earth looked meagre and poor in the pastures and fields. And then, beyond, stretched the vaporous blue valley southwards among the mountains down to Arkansas, rugged and wild. The contrast was terrible, between the foreground and the background, between the homes of men and the setting in which they had reared those houses. And that ignoble pink structure down there was his home, Daniel reflected, the home to which he was returning voluntarily, wilfully one might say... and why? He thought of what he would find, and he thought of what he had just left. He saw, as if the first time now, the front room, with its cheap imitation oak bed in the corner, where slept the authors of his being. The dip in the centre showed through the sordid bed coverings, of the same ochreous hues as the bedstead itself. The ancient paper on the walls tended to the same subdued tones, and

hung loose in one corner in a big triangular gaping yawn, showing the old broken plaster behind it. The shelf over the wood stove had a tin alarm clock on it, and a bottle of "tonic" left over from his father's previous winter spell. Last year's calendar, with an inanely rosy fisherboy, with cheeks powdered and painted like a shop-girl, hung underneath. Slatternly chairs there were, and a stale smell of cooking and sleeping. Beyond were the two rooms where slept the six boys

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and five of the girls. The walls here were papered with random pages from a mail order catalogue. Broken window panes were patched with wadded newspapers and nailed-up boards. The beds were makeshifts and tumble-down. The roof in this part of the house leaked so badly that the ceiling threatened imminent danger of giving up the task of holding on any longer. Its fall was stayed here and there by strips of lath tacked on.

Daniel turned away from the vision as if he were sick. It was no worse than a thousand other houses down through this section of the country, he knew; and yet, fresh as he was from the sight of how some other people lived, in what constant freshness and sweetness and cleanliness they passed their days and their nights, it seemed to him that until now never had he really seen his home. Surely, never until now had his gorge so risen against it. The finest house that he had ever been in before this time had been the little place of Mr. and Mrs. Wells. There had been a piano, and a high blue vase with some artificial roses in it, very artificial, and rugs on the floor, and lace curtains, and rocking chairs with padding on them. But somehow that had not been so alien to his own home, had not so hopelessly revealed to him the

utter degradation of the place in which his family lived. It had, in a way, seemed more truly homelike than the big place from which he was just coming; but the charm of the woman, and her offering him a room to live there, had brought into sudden awful

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contrast the ways in which human beings live, in a manner he had never felt until now.

As he stood looking, he saw a group of people come out of the door of the house, and stand talking on the porch and the steps. Then a black-clad figure left them and stood below for a moment. When he moved down towards the road Daniel recognized the man by his heavy steady gait. It was the Reverend Mr. Holcomb. Daniel knew that in all likelihood the family had been receiving a "Postolic" visitation. The boy kicked vigorously at a loose rock, and continued his way down the hillside.

What was the use? What was the use of living? What was he living for? What did he want? The questions were all moiling about in his head, and the boy could not answer them. Last year at this time, he had been concerned with no such affairs, and had merely been wondering about sex and the problem of a new suit for Sundays. He had even bought a toothbrush, but the family had soon seen to it that such nonsense did not thrive in their midst, and the brush had met an ignoble end.

But now Daniel was seriously beginning to concern himself with the ends for which men live. Religion had entered into his thinking, not through the instrumentality of Mr. Holcomb, or of any other formal man of God, devised by society for such purposes. One of the old carpenters with whom the boy worked discussed God

and the universe with him every noon-time, accenting his points with a waved

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sandwich or the emphasis of an apple core thrown away. Daniel had for years been convinced that there was no God. How he had, in the very midst of the Holy Rollers, under the very nose of the Reverend Mr. Holcomb, come to this conclusion no man can say. He had cogitated deeply when he was about twelve years old, and since that time he had listened but leniently whenever the preacher had been vociferating on the subject. None of these men knew a thing about the subject on which they were talking, he had concluded, when later he had gone into the other churches in the town. The old carpenter had been different. Mr. Carr his name was, and he was a firm believer in some quaint sect which taught that we live, not on the outside, but on the interior of the globe, with a duplex sort of sun, light and dark, in the centre. The lines of sight are curved, and so we cannot see the antipodes across the great central void. It was all very strange and unbelievable, but Mr. Carr had verses of the Scripture to back up his faith, and abstruse Biblical calculations to confute the atheistical opinions of the young boy who sat talking with him. Daniel could not lend the man his credence, but at any rate he respected the carpenter's knowledge and thought on the subject, and appreciated truly the man's willingness to talk with him. Hardly a day but brought some new facet of the old jewel, truth, into play, for the old man and the young boy to talk about.

Daniel sat down on a stump to think. What about

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it? What was he going to do? What were people here on earth for? Why was he going down into the valley to these people with whom he had no sympathies, and who meant almost nothing to him despite the fact that he had adventitiously been born into their midst? He was coldly analytical of the whole situation as he sat there nursing his knee, and he told himself that simply because he had come from the bodies of those two people (he was rather proud of himself that he could say it to himself so calmly) he owed them no duty. They had not asked his permission, and surely they had done little enough for him since he had been born. They just happened to have been his parents instead of someone else. He just happened to be their offspring, along with a dozen or so of others. How wonderful it would have been to have been born the child of Mrs. Delacourt, for instance!

With that thought came the revulsion, however, the surging up of the old family feeling that was stronger than himself, and he swung round once more into loyalty to his family, hating them though he was, yet clinging to them, hoping that something could yet be done for them and with them, and that he could still be happy in their midst. It was selfish to run off and grab all the advantages to himself, go to live in the clean house up there on the hill and let the others wallow in that dirty place down there. The boy gripped his fists at the thought, and his

heart was bitter within him. If only there were no others, if only he were free to accept the woman's kind disinterested offer, if only he could forget those pathetic people down there in their hovel. Then once more his sense of fidelity to his family rose within him, and he

shook off the ugly thoughts that had been on him. He was torn. He wanted the advantages that were held out to him; and yet some old sense of faithfulness within him would not let him take them. The young stalwart desire to help others was strong in him; the strongest. "No, by God," he said half aloud, slipping into a form of speech in which he himself did not believe, as he rose to his feet. "I'll go down, and I'll stick it out. Let them do their damndest, I don't care. They can't any more than kill me. Hell!" And perhaps under the circumstances, this was as wise a reaction as any other.

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"There he is now, a-comin' in at the gate." Daniel heard the derogatory tones of the young speaker's voice, and then there was a patter of feet towards the door. "You're a-goin' to git it!" intoned one of his sisters as he stepped up on the porch.

His father was just rolling to the edge of the bed when the boy entered the room. Cavernous yawns and much scratching of the head in a desultory way

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were the order of the day, as Mr. Durnan sat with one foot caressing the other, socked but shoeless.

"Where you been?" demanded the father, ominous above his dilapidated moustache and over-pigmented nose. "You ought to been here when the Reverend made us a 'postolic' call, instead of gaddin' about the country with God knows who."

"I haven't been gadding about the country," said Daniel in a surly tone. In such circumstances his father's voice always roused the boy to animosity, blind and

unreasoning, so that he would have argued that black was white, if occasion arose.

“Don’t you talk back to me like that,” Mr. Durnan said, mounting to yet greater heights of fury. “You ain’t too old for me to lick yet, let me tell you, young man, even if I have been laborin’ for you all these here sixteen years, and sweatin’ for you, night and day.” This was hardly true, in an accurate, sense, of course, since for the past four years, in one way and another, Daniel had been contributing to the home nearly as much in money as his father, from whom he had received not a penny in all that time. As for the “licking,” Daniel knew this was an idle boast, but none the less irritating for its emptiness.

“The trouble with you is, that you’re stuck up. That’s what’s the matter with you. You been at them there schools too long. You got too many books in your head, fillin’ you with them highfalutin’ ideas as takes away your faith in your God from you. That’s what’s the matter with you.”

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There seemed no necessity for reply, and so Daniel held his tongue in silence. His heart was filled with bitter loathing, however, and with shame and disgust. He thought, as he stood there with his back against the door jamb, of what the old carpenter had told him one day, how that there came a time in the life of nearly every young person, when he or she found it almost impossible to continue under the same roof with parents. It was just like the birds or the animals, the old man had said, except that we have gained certain sentimental ideas about home and the family, which tend to make us attempt a perpetuation of such entities when our deeper instincts tend to disrupt them. This was nature’s

preventive of incest, Mr. Carr had pointed out, and when we recognize it as such, we can more easily adapt ourselves to it, and perhaps even overcome the animosity.

“Why don’t you answer me, you!” roared Mr. Durnan. And Daniel, coming out of his reverie, wondered what it was that he was supposed to answer. He looked at the older man calmly, fortified by his cogitations.

“He’s bull-headed, that’s what he is,” put in Mrs. Durnan from the further door, whither she had come without Daniel’s perceiving her. The boy turned and looked at her, and a strange quiet seemed to come over him with the sigh that stirred his bosom. Let them all come at once, let them drive him as far down as possible. He could be no lower in spirit, as regarded

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his feelings towards his family, he was sick with it all, the strident voices, the tumultuous passions in the room, the sordid surroundings, the contrast with that peace and quiet and cleanliness which he had just left on the hill, which he had given up for their sakes, the sake of these people here in this house. His eyelids looked heavy and tired; he was like a sick young lion baited by a circle of dogs.

“Well, I’ll tell you one thing,” remarked Mr. Durnan, working his feet into his shoes laboriously, “By God, he’s comin’ to church with us from now on, or I’ll know the reason why.” With this cryptic threat, he rose to his feet, belched, and left the room. He felt, and his family felt, that he had acquitted himself like a man. There was pride in all their hearts.

Daniel, too, went out, after a while, and, by way of the barn and two fences which he crawled through, he

made his way down to the pasture below the railroad track. Almost immediately the centaur came running to him, laughing. One would have said the torso was that of a boy fifteen years old, although very well developed as to its muscles, and with a certain elfin maturity in its features, tanned and roughened with the weather. Of all the Durnans, the young creature seemed to feel most at ease with Daniel.

“Gee, I’m glad you’re here, Daniel,” he burst forth with that curious energy of his. “I got something to tell you. What you think I seen last night?”

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“Saw,” corrected the boy, with something of the tone of Mrs. Delacourt’s voice in his own. “What?” he demanded, without waiting for the emendation.

“A fellow down here in the woods, and he was something like me, only he had little horns and a goat’s tail, instead of...” The remark was finished with a toss of his head towards his flanks.

“I don’t believe it,” said Daniel slowly but without the bitterness that just then would have colored any remark he might have addressed to a member of his family. “There isn’t any such thing. What did he look like?”

“He was sittin’ on a log down there by the water,” said the centaur, “playin’ on some kind of a whistle or something, only it had a lot of things to it, along in a row. And he didn’t have no clothes on, and I thought it was you, takin’ a bath, and I went down, and there he was, and then I seen his little kind of a goat’s tail. And his horns was little kind of buttons of goat’s horns, that’s what they was.”

“Aw, you’re dreaming,” said Daniel, not unkindly, smiling at the enthusiasm of the animal.

“No, I ain’t,” reiterated the centaur, with a shake of his head. “I didn’t believe it myself at first, except I could hear his music just as plain as anything. An’ then when he looked up he seen me, an’... an’... an’ he said something.”

“What’d he say,” demanded Daniel with growing interest.

“Aw, nothing,” replied the centaur, not looking

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at the boy. He pawed loose a rock with a fore-hoof, and stooping picked it up, and flung it at a tree at the edge of the pasture.

“Go on and tell me,” said the boy. “Come on, let’s get further down in the pasture.”

“You won’t laugh at me if I tell you something?” went on the centaur as they walked down through the brush side by side. And still he hesitated when the boy had assured him that he would not laugh at him.

“Well,” he said finally, “I can talk another language from what you know. An’ he said something in that.”

“What do you mean, another language?” asked the boy.

“I don’t know, just another language,” answered the centaur. He was at a loss for words to convey his meaning. Daniel cogitated as he walked.

“You mean the way you can understand when... when Belle whinnies to you?”

“No!” replied the centaur, with a show of anger, expressive of the growing new shame that he was feeling for his connection with the old mare. “That’s nothing. I don’t mean that. He said something in... in the other language.”

“Well, say something in it, and see if I can understand it,” said Daniel.

“No!” answered the animal again peevishly. “Of course you can’t understand it. It’s from... from the other time.” The words flew from him unwittingly,

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simply, as though he himself were hardly conscious of their meaning.

Daniel turned and looked at him, puzzled.

“The other time? What other time? Have you seen him before?”

The centaur had paused too, now, and seemed to be dreaming open-eyed.

“I believe I have,” he said, as though to himself. “I had forgotten all about it until this very minute, but I believe I did see him. I believe I did see him.” He looked at Daniel with a light in his eyes, as though he had suddenly come to a new realization. “He’s Pan, that’s what he is. He’s Pan.” He seemed quite delighted with his achievement of the word. “I remember now. Funny I didn’t think of that before. I wish I’d thought of that last night.”

To Daniel it seemed that the creature was wandering strangely in his talk. They had been quite close together a moment before, with a bond of sympathy that warmed the boy’s heart after what he had just gone through in the house. And now the animal was babbling strange words, talking of impossible experiences, hinting at cryptic happenings to which the boy could not lend credence.

“Now where did you see him?” he demanded of the centaur, when they had come down to the clump of willows overhanging the little pool of water. “Where was he sitting?”

“He was sittin’ on that there log over there,”

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replied the other, splashing through the shallow water at the edge of the pond, and pointing, “with his feet on the other side, so that I could see his back. Gee, I wish’t I had remembered then what his name was!” He barked back to that thought meditatively. “Maybe he’ll come again tonight! Then I can say it to him.”

Daniel was still incredulous, even in the overpowering evidence of the log and the very milieu in which the centaur claimed to have experienced the phenomenon.

“Well, what did he say to you?” he insisted, still unbelieving, but willing to enter into the fiction, whatever its object might be.

“Aw, he said some... some poetry,” answered the centaur, trying to sound derogatory as he said the word. Daniel felt that whatever the creature was putting on now, however, it had only been with pleasure that he had heard the thing last night.

“What do you know about poetry?” he asked with growing incredulity. For the first time, he felt that there was more here than met the eye of common sense. For the first time, he doubted his ability to explain away this thing that the centaur was talking about. Poetry! the boy was certain that not among the Durnans or their neighbors had the young creature come into contact with poetry. And if not, where else among these hills had he even heard the word?

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“Who told you about poetry?” he asked again, varying the form of his question.

“Why, I just *know* about poetry, that’s all,” replied the centaur, once more showing resentment, as though it were the most natural thing in the world for a misbegotten monster in the hills of Missouri to be acquainted with the mysteries of poetic composition. “You don’t have to be told everything in this world, do you!”

“All right,” said Daniel in a soothing tone. “What did he say to you then ? What was the poetry he said to you?”

The centaur seemed mollified by his tone, and returned only to his original shyness.

“Aw, you wouldn’t understand it anyway,” he said, as though half ashamed of his superior knowledge. Adroitly he smacked a horse-fly on his left flank, and flicked it into the water.

“Well, go on and say it anyway,” said Daniel, “and let’s see if I do.”

The centaur raised himself and tilted his head, with arms folded on his chest preparatory to reciting the poetry. Then his posture melted once more.

“You promise you won’t laugh?” he insisted, looking doubtfully at Daniel in a last access of timidity.

“Go on, you silly,” laughed the boy, sitting on a slanting trunk of a willow, which grew out low over the water. There was great affection in his voice as he spoke, and his eyes were fond of the creature,

standing there half up to his knees in the water, with the long low level light of the setting sun warm and mellow on his body half sorrel, half human flesh.

Without further ado, the centaur plunged forthwith into the recital of his message, and over the evening air

there floated out the mellow rhythmical measures, which throbbed and pulsed and lilted, so that even Daniel, who understood no single syllable, was stirred to their beauty, and hung silent even when they were ended.

In the Greek of old Aleman the centaur spoke:

“The crests and the hollows of the mountains are asleep, and the headlands and the ravines, and the leaves, and all creeping things that the dark earth nourishes, and the mountain-haunting beasts, and the race of bees, and the creatures in the depths of the dark-gleaming ocean; and there is sleep among the tribes of broad-winged birds.”

When it was ended, there was silence between them, while the young animal stood, still seemingly rapt by the vision that had been his, unconscious of the boy or of the scene about them. Yet he was the first to move, and he broke the silence.

“That’s swell, ain’t it!” he said, turning his glowing eyes towards Daniel.

“It sounded beautiful all right; what does it mean?” asked the boy.

“Oh, it’s all about the night,” replied the centaur

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casually, “and the mountains and everything being asleep, and it ends up by saying even the ‘broad-winged birds’ is asleep too.”

“What language is it in?” asked the boy, drawing up his knees and folding his arms about them.

“Why, I don’t know, it’s just the other language, that’s all,” explained the centaur. “Everybody used to talk that way, only not so fine all the time, you understand, like poetry.”

“Well, where did you learn it?”

“I didn’t learn it, I just knew it, that’s all,” repeated the animal with some acerbity. “Didn’t I just tell you that everybody used to talk that way!”

“Where?”

“Why, the other time, ain’t I just been a-tellin’ you!”

“What other time?”

The centaur stopped and looked at the boy, dumbfounded, incredulous.

“Don’t you remember your other time? Don’t you remember nothin’? The hills and the trees and everything? Gee, I remember something more every day!” He turned and spat in the approved fashion of Mr. Durnan, conscious, by the look in Daniel’s face, that here was a place at last where the animal had the advantage over the human being. “Gee!” he reiterated, gazing off into the distance and trying to appear unconscious of the fact that the boy was looking at him.

“There was a time when there was a lot of us this

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way,” said the centaur, referring with a jerked thumb to his hind quarters.

“Honest?”

“Sure; and we used to have some swell old races, too, believe me.” He was leaning against the bole of the tree, close beside the boy. “And fun! Say boy, you don’t know what fun is!” The creature chuckled to himself and slapped the shoulder of his animal body loudly. “There was one old aunt of mine we used to play tricks on. Gee, that was swell.”

“Was she... that way?” asked Daniel nodding allusively.

“Sure! Lots of us was!” expostulated the animal. “And she couldn’t see very good. And sometimes when she was laying down, we used to play tricks on her. There was one awful good trick we used to play on her, but I can’t think what it was now. Maybe I’ll remember it, and I’ll tell you about it.”

The sun was set by this time, and a little chill air was rising from the pond by which they were resting. Two of the younger Durnans had come into the upper part of the pasture, and were noisily driving the cows up through the gate and across the track. Daniel looked up in that direction like one who had been living in a different world. He did not want to go back into that bondage.

“Well, I must go,” he said, however, “I’m hungry.”

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The look that came into the eyes of the centaur then was pathetic. His little hour of triumph was over. He had been talking with a human being as he never yet had talked, and had been recounting experiences which evidently were strange and new to Daniel. That was an adventure sweet to him, the first time that anything like a look of envy had come into the eyes of a mortal. But now the boy was more than revenging himself, albeit unwittingly. For he was entering into the house along with other human beings, on terms of equality. He said nothing, and so Daniel little realized how dear to the creature was the privilege which the boy would gladly have foresworn.

“So long,” called the centaur, still standing where the boy had left him.

“Aren’t you going up to the gate with me?” asked Daniel, looking back. Without a word the young animal trotted out, glad to prolong even for these poor few

moments the human companionship. They passed up the field in silence.

“Some day I’ll take you riding. Shall I?” said the centaur. It was his word of appreciation for the talk which the boy had granted him.

Daniel’s eyes lightened, and he turned to smile on the creature.

“That will be fine!” he said. “Goodnight.” Impulsively he put out his hand.

“So long!” replied the centaur, awkwardly putting his roughened hand into the grasp of the other.

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It was the first time that he had ever shaken hands, and he turned and galloped away in confusion, throwing up his hind legs high into the air. Daniel shuddered in spite of himself at the feel of the creature’s hand. “It was like, a monkey’s paw,” he said half aloud. Then he went up to supper and some additional hectoring.

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Next morning at the breakfast table, Mr. Durnan announced to the family his intention of taking the colt into town that morning, along with Belle, who should help draw the wagon.

“If it pleases the good Lord God to have men show their humble sperrit in this fashion, it ain’t up to me to gainsay Him,” he remarked philosophically, gratified to be, at one and the same time, carrying out a work scheme of his own and fulfilling the will of the Almighty. Besides, as the Reverend Mr. Holcomb had pointed out, it would, in some unaccountable fashion, bring him good luck and prosperity extraordinary. As he understood,

finding a horseshoe would not shine in at all the same light as this thing which he purposed doing.

“Will he lead?” questioned Mrs. Durnan.

“I reckon he’ll lead all right,” answered Mr. Durnan, nodding his head darkly.

And so it was that Belle was once more harnessed to the wagon that morning, to be taken into town. The colt seemed in excellent fettle.

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“Reckon we better tie him?” asked Ben.

“Naw,” replied his father, casting an appraising eye over the young creature nevertheless. “Where would you fasten him?”

“We could put a old belt on him,” said Ben, spitting after the manner of his father, since he had for the moment taken over the general directive functions of the older man. “And then we could fasten the line on to that, and tie it on to Belle.”

“I reckon that would be safer,” granted Mr. Durnan. Ben disappeared into the barn. He returned with a heavy strap provided with a buckle, with which he approached the centaur.

“Come here, Dick,” he said, “and git your belt.”

The young animal was all eyes, and looked with a sort of eager anticipation at the strap.

“Goin’ to put that on me?” he demanded, grinning. “Gee!” It was the first piece of accoutrement that had ever been granted to him, and in his eyes it was his first step towards human regalia. It was not, for him, a piece of harness, but a belt, such as he had seen Daniel wear sometimes on Sundays, when overalls had been doffed and “good clothes” had been put on.

“Whoa, now, hold still,” said Ben as he approached the creature, speaking as he would have done to any other animal that he was harnessing.

“I never had a belt before!” said the young centaur, and his eyes were bright as he looked first at Ben and then at Mr. Durnan. Both men were more

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concerned with its function as a restraint, however.

“Think it’ll hold?” asked the older man.

“Sure!” answered his son.

The animal was very proud of his new adornment, and kept looking down at it sideways, and readjusting it to his hips, walking about the yard with arms akimbo, hoping that someone would pass by on the road and notice his new possession. He felt quite human, and even tried to put a human swagger into the movement of his upper body as he moved along on his equine torso, with its four-footed rhythm.

But his triumph was short-lived. Ben came out of the barn with another strap, longer and thinner, with a snap at one end of it.

“Come here, Dick,” he called in short businesslike tones, as he might have called a dog or a horse.

The creature came readily, stepping out with conscious pride, smiling at Ben with confidence in his face. Then the strap was snapped on to a ring in his belt, and Ben turned with the other end to attach it to Belle’s harness.

The centaur’s face fell. What was this? This wasn’t the way a human being’s belt was fastened on to someone else by means of a strap... and least of all, to a mare.

“What you going to do?” suddenly demanded the centaur, rearing back and nearly tearing the strap from the boy’s grasp. “Aw, gee, Ben, don’t do that!”

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“Hold still, here, you!” roared Ben, giving a vicious tug at the strap, and gathering in the slack once more. “Cut out that monkey business, will you! I’m goin’ to fasten you on to your mother, that’s what I’m goin’ to do, and I don’t want no funny work, neither.”

The young centaur got hold of the strap now with his hands, and strove with all his might to loose it from his belt.

“I ain’t a-goin to have it!” he yelled. “I ain’t a-goin’ to be fastened to no damned old mare, I tell you! You let me go, now!” He was tearing at the snap distractedly, blindly, striving to manoeuvre its mysterious complication. He rattled the ring and the snap together, and ground his teeth, and plied his impotent fingers to master the combination.

“Git the whip,” said Ben to his father. “That’ll settle him. We got to learn him sooner or later. We’re goin’ to have to break him just like we do any other colt. Hold still, you, damn you!”

“You ain’t a-goin’ to tie me, I tell you! I ain’t goin’ to have it!” The young thing was still yelling out, when suddenly he sprang forward, with a loud cry, forgetful of belt and strap and mare. The whip had for the first time come down across his flanks.

“Hold him!” called out Mr. Durnan.

“I got him all right,” replied Ben. “Let him have another one.”

“Stop, damn you!” screamed the centaur, in mortal pain from the whip. All the little Durnans, standing

near the fence to see the show, grinned and giggled to each other.

The animal was rearing and plunging now, striving to break away from the tantalizing strap which held him within range of the whip. He was a superb sight as he lunged high, carrying that child's torso of his up into the air, perilously, one would have said except that each time he came down safely, only to lunge up once more. He was screaming and swearing viciously, kicking out, and striving to break away from the grasp of the two men.

Finally he simply stood still, trembling in every limb, and crying as a child might cry, with great heart-filling spasms of yells. He leaned forward his head and shoulders on his animal mother's neck, who had meanwhile been standing with pointed ears and distended nostrils, but quite still, watching him. She too was trembling slightly, and as she felt her offspring bend towards her, she whinnied gently and bent round her head to sniff at him.

"I guess we got him that time," said Ben to his father.

"It's time we was gettin' him used to things," agreed Mr. Durnan. And now the strap was quietly attached to Belle's harness, while the young centaur sobbed out his grief against his mother's shoulder.

"Git up!" clucked Mr. Durnan, established on the seat of the wagon, lightly touching Belle with the reins. The old mare started forward, and the centaur raised his tear-reddened eyes and, still sobbing, walked beside her towards the gate.

“He’ll lead all right now,” called Ben to his father. Mr. Durnan nodded in a superior way, spat, and set the brake to let the wagon gently down the sharp slope to the road. The centaur was not smiling now. All pride in his belt was gone. Only hate of Mr. Durnan and of Ben was in his heart. His flanks still tingled from the whip, but the pain in his throat, from utter woe and despondency, was greater than the physical pain, and he was miserable beyond measure.

Mary and Belle were both hitched to the wagon, with Belle on the off side, with the centaur beside her. At first he had trouble in adapting his stride to her gait, so that he was alternately pulled from in front and from the rear, by the appliance attached to his belt. He was nervous over the new experience, and particularly since the whip episode, which had taken from him some of his wits for the moment. Every automobile that passed him sent him scurrying for a second or so, until the restraining tug of the belt was sensible at his waist. Part of the time he would be prancing sideways, with palpitating heart, never before having come so near to an automobile, and never once having set foot on the open road. He was hardly conscious of what was going on about him, such a welter of new sounds and novel sights it all was to him. The world was passing in one vast conglomerate blur, wherein he could but with difficulty distinguish separate objects, which, before he could identify them, were gone, only to be replaced by others; and all of them seemed to him rapidly passing

phenomena. It was all terribly confusing, nerve-racking. He wished, with the few remaining wits he had about him, that he were well back at home.

To the passersby, also, it was a novel experience, thus to come suddenly upon the strange spectacle of the untoward object in the hot and dusty road. To many of them the odd colt of the Durnans' was by this time a common sight, standing in the pasture below the railroad, or working in the field, and they merely waved a friendly hand to Mr. Durnan in passing, and then screwed themselves round in their seats to see how the young thing was leading. At the red store on the corner, there was the usual congregation of loafers and whittlers, including Mr. Holcomb, who was standing with one foot on the low step of the building, joining in the regular week-day talk of the place. This was Monday, not Sunday, and morning, not night. Evenings and Sabbaths were his appointed times of godliness, and at other seasons he was not above smiling at a good smutty yarn, or grinning at a familiar use of the Almighty's name. His celluloid collar was still gleaming from its Sabbatical cleanliness, but its attendant black tie was absent, laid away for the week. He wore a grayish seersucker suit, spotted down the front with the food of past meals.

Mr. Durnan did not halt, but kept on his way around the double curve and headed towards town. He did not smile in reply to the nondescript rain of laughs and cheers and remarks from the group lounging at

the store, but gravely nodded to them and slapped the reins on the backs of the two mares. The sight of Mr. Holcomb had brought strongly present to him again that reverend gentleman's remark about the will of the Lord, and how that prosperity would fall upon him who thus publicly confessed his humility in the faces of all men. Mr. Durnan fixed an eye on the nervous back of the

young centaur and somewhat sternly drove on. He was pleased within him, but did not feel that it would be seemly to express that joy in outward fashion. He was sitting, as it were, in the eye of God, doing public penance, and not his it was to smile or be light-minded.

“Giddap, Belle! Come on, Mary! ” he adjured his mares, as a matter of form, and the wagon rattled on its way to Roosevelt.

Even of those who had not before seen the strange creature, many had heard of its existence, and these gaped from their porches and their front yards. Chiefly they were turned to mirth by the sight, with no jot of wonder or marvel in their faces, only a thin surface sense of amusement, which sent some of them laughing until their sides hurt them, and calling funny remarks to their neighbors, later to be repeated, with many an “I says,” at the noon meal, to their men folks returned from the Mill. Children scuttled back into the security of doors and gateways, and from those retreats gazed with solemn eyes at the apparition. They alone showed any sign of wonder, until they saw how their elders were taking the

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spectacle, and then they too grew ribald, and, approaching the highway once more, began calling out remarks after the retreating vehicle. It was a gala occasion along the road.

Turned heads and casual glances were the general result in the automobiles passing by, too soon gone to permit of longer inspection. In all the two miles between the Durnan house and the Square in the heart of the little town, it is safe to state that not one person seemed to sense the miracle that was in their midst, so sunk were they from any possibility of being startled into vivid

realization of any kind. At the Mill, work was momentarily halted while all hands rushed to the wide-open doors, leaving their whirring saws to revolve madly in peace. The older store by the second cross-roads here, differing from the newer red store only in its more sedate accretion of filth in corners and shelves, differed not at all from its younger rival in the quality of its on-hangers. Old Grandpa Dinwiddie was here, with his rubicund face and white whiskers, and a dozen others. They yelled the same pleasantries, and laughed the same laughs as the store down the road, and were greeted with the same serious nod of the head by Mr. Durnan. And he, slapping the reins with the same gesture as before, drove on towards the viaduct in all solemnity.

He was growing a little self-conscious by this time, however, a trifle disconcerted by the universal attention that he was attracting with his colt. The road

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was hot in the September sun, and every car that passed sent clouds of thick white dust swirling up about him, which but added to the heat and the discomfort. "Git on there, damn you!" came more and more frequently from his lips down the long treeless stretch between the Mill and the gentle rise where he had to begin walking the horses.

Here a man was lounging beside the road, evidently a denizen of the covered wagon which Mr. Durnan had noticed drawn up in the weedy stretch beside the highway.

"How much will you take for the thing?" called out the stranger as Mr. Durnan passed by. With a quick eye the dark newcomer had been looking the centaur over as the wagon approached.

"I ain't sellin,'" replied Mr. Durnan curtly, and drove on.

"I'll give you two bits fer him," was the final taunt from the swarthy vagabond.

"Go to hell!" called back Mr. Durnan over his shoulder, more for the clarification of his own feelings than actually to consign the other man to eternal perdition.

After they had passed under the gaunt railway viaduct of strutted timbers, the houses were more frequent, and they began the long climb into town. Their reception here was not unlike that in the more open country, except that it came now in more constant and concentrated form, a running fire of comment and laughter, which at first somewhat grated on

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Mr. Durnan's sensibilities and then brought to him a soothing sense of martyrdom, sooner than one might have anticipated, that mild form of pride in the display of oneself in which the freaks of sideshows are said universally to indulge, and to which the followers of Mr. Freud delightedly apply an ugly allusive name. Mr. Durnan drove on, telling himself how much this thing was hurting him, and, as a matter of fact, having the time of his life. By the time that he had climbed laboriously the long Hospital Hill, halted to breathe the horses, and had turned into the final short up-shoot towards the Square, he was feeling a keen anticipation of the effect he would have in the busy mart of central trade, albeit he was masking his elation under a dour mouth of straight-lipped acerbity, and eyes that seemed conscious but of the evil in mankind.

Thus, firm in his faith in the Reverend Holcomb and in God, Mr. Durnan drove up Centre Street, conscious of the treasures that were being stored up for him through his act. He could almost hear the clink of the dollars as they accumulated with the turning of the spokes in his wheels. Every fall of the twelve hoofs before him was no doubt registering in the great Account Books, and so keen was his occupation with these conceptions that he had ceased almost to be aware of the commotion his young centaur was causing on the sidewalks of the town. The fervor of the thing took hold of Mr. Durnan's spirit, and

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he began to hum to himself the words of the Postolic hymn:

Will it pay, oh, will it pay,
At the last Great Judgment Day,
Will it pay, oh, will it pay,
At the last great day?

“Amen!” ejaculated Mr. Durnan to himself piously, as he approached the corner of the Square. He remembered the scene vividly in after years, and was wont frequently to recount how the courthouse clock beyond the Square stood at exactly nine. At the right a man was selling cider by the glass, over the side of his tail wagon, drawn up to the curb. At the left, in front of the bank, people were by this time lined up almost as though it were a parade about to pass by; and more could be seen running from all sides, to have a look at the creature coming up the street.

“Will it pay, oh, will it pay?” Mr. Durnan was singing to himself, half aloud, in his nervousness, as he gulped, and then spat.

And then the Law appeared, suddenly, implacably, silently, stepping out from the shelter of a hardware store on the right corner, and holding up its august hand, for Mr. Durnan to stop. Attired in dark blue, with brass buttons, and a wide-brimmed soft black hat on his head, the man was consciously unconscious of the bright star that shone on his bosom and made him what he was, the Law. He wore a heavy watch-chain, like a train conductor’s.

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“Stop there a minute, mister,” said the Law. “Where you goin’?”

“Down to the Roosevelt County Hardware,” replied Mr. Durnan, and then somehow connected momentarily that statement with the sudden appearance of the Law out of the front door of the rival hardware firm. He wished that he had not been so frank.

“Down to the Roosevelt County Hardware, eh?” replied the Law, pausing to turn and wink at some of the bystanders, who, by this time, were pressing in from the curbs, to see what the excitement was. Out of their midst rose the soaring heights only of the worn man on the seat of the wagon, and the tanned torso of the centaur, like that of a naked fourteen-year-old boy seated on somebody’s shoulders. As a matter of fact, late-comers gained that very impression, seeing only the upper portion of his body.

“Down to the Roosevelt County Hardware,” repeated the Law humorously, looking around once more among

the spectators. There was a general laugh then, over the Law's quizzicality.

"And where'd you come from?" continued the Law, looking up sharply into Mr. Durnan's face with his head turned on one side, so as to catch every syllable of the man's reply.

"From my place, about two mile out on the Farmingville Road," replied Mr. Durnan stolidly. In his eyes he had the dead look with which country people

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frequently meet what they term the "smartness" of more metropolitan dwellers.

The Law considered his answer for a moment silently, as though inclined to doubt it, still with his eyes fixed on the man's face.

"An' where'd you get this thing?" demanded the Law, twitching his head in the direction of the centaur. Again there was a general laugh. "Wait a minute, boys," said the Law, half turning with upraised hand. He was in beautiful control of his audience now and silence followed immediately. Firmly he turned towards Mr. Durnan.

"Well?" he insisted.

"It was a colt dropped by that there off mare this spring," said Mr. Durnan dully, indicating old Belle. Under the general surge of interest in her direction the mare stood without a quiver, calm, imperturbable, with drooping under-lip.

"This one?" asked the Law, with mock seriousness duly appreciated by the crowd.

"Yes sir."

"Now, what'd you say your name was?" said the Law, again cocking his head. Mr. Durnan, of course, had not

said anything about his name, and he hesitated, as any man would naturally do, about thus exposing in all its nakedness his cognomen, among this public crowd. There is a feeling almost of indecency that sweeps over a man at such a moment. He said nothing.

“Now look here,” warned the Law, with a thumb

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thrust under one point of his nickel star, tilting it, as it were, so that Mr. Durnan could the better observe it. A sense of iron firmness was present in the man’s features as he fixed a meaning eye on Mr. Durnan’s countenance. The demonstration was impressive, both for Mr. Durnan and for the multitude.

“Jo Durnan,” confessed the man promptly, and a wave of dizziness went over him. His mouth went dry, and the world swam. It seemed to him that the mob fairly welled up with contempt at that moment, contempt of those two names, Jo Durnan.

A temporary diversion mercifully drew all eyes from Mr. Durnan’s discomposure, at this moment. Some one had playfully laid a lighted cigarette against the centaur’s flank, to see what he would do, and the animal had resented the action, with a spasmodic gesture drawing up one hind hoof and letting it fly. Fortunately it was not with full force, and no harm was done. But the crowd was delighted.

“Stop, damn you!” squealed the creature, and the people howled with joy.

The Law saw its grip on affairs fast vanishing. He moved forward authoritatively to clear a place about the animal.

“Stand back there,” he adjured the men and boys, and then returned hastily to wind up this matter, before a new

access of alien interest could wrest from him the limelight.

“Well, Mr. Durnan, you better turn right back and get home with this here creature before I arrest

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you,” said the Law. “You got a clear case of indecent exposure here in the public streets, and if I ever catch you again, it’ll go hard with you. Understand?”

Blindly, lacking all comprehension of the situation, Mr. Durnan nodded. This was not enough for the Law.

“You clear out of this town within ten minutes, or I’ll take you up,” added the Law, waxing in wrath. “Comin’ into town with a bare thing like that beside you! You get some clothes on the thing before you show your face in town again. You hear me?” The man was incensed with a higher and yet higher moral point of view, as he considered the case. At first he had seemed more amused than disgusted, but now he mounted from crag to crag in his ethical climb to a sublime point of view, whence the moral turpitude of Mr. Durnan showed itself the unbelievable thing it manifestly was, black and hideous. Foam of his zeal did not froth from the mouth of the Law in these latter stretches of his wrath, but some little boys standing near did see bubbles gathering in the corners of the man’s mouth, and they were fascinated. His flashing eyes continued to shoot fire at Mr. Durnan as the man constrainedly turned about his team and once more directed their heads homewards.

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III

THERE was something almost uncanny about the celerity with which the prosperity promised to Mr. Durnan by Mr. Holcomb approached that gentleman. It was, as a matter of fact, standing, at this present moment, talking with the reverend person himself, as the latter sat on the portico of the red store at the cross-roads. Prosperity himself stood, with hat cocked well back on his head, leaning informally with one hand against the square support of the porch roof.

“Do you reckon she could take all four of us?” was asking Prosperity, fingering nervously the diamond in his red tie, and then shifting his neck in his collar, and then removing imperceptibly the position of one foot, and then winking elaborately at Mr. Holcomb. Nor did this end his manoeuvres by any means; but to chronicle only the physical doings of Mr. Dewitt would take forever more, since they were unending. Mr. Holcomb had been for a moment offended by the seemingly personal reference in Mr. Dewitt’s first wink at him, but the serious unconsciousness of the man, and his continuing in other forms of meaningless peripheral activity soon convinced

the minister that it was only some form of nervousness on the part of the newcomer.

“There’s four of us, you know, and that takes a mouthful,” went on Mr. Dewitt, now concerned with

his left cuff, then with his nose, and then with his collar button.

“She can take care of you, all right,” replied Mr. Holcomb calmly, resenting the imputation that the neighborhood was not equal to the care of four strangers in their midst. “An’ she’ll feed you good, too, from all I hear,” he added, looking fixedly at the man, as though Mr. Dewitt had suggested an insult to the crowd. Then he looked silently at some of his associates on the porch, and there was a vague chorus of agreement, with divers expectorations lending moral support to the Reverend in his attitude. “Yes, siree,” agreed one or two. Old Uncle John Urmston started on a long story to back up the minister’s statement, but this was too much of a good thing, and Mr. Holcomb bent his attention to the next question of the stranger, while Uncle John’s audience petered out to the one lone man seated next to him, and even he was not listening to him.

“Where’s she live?” demanded Mr. Dewitt, tackling the inside of his left knee, and then violently dislocating one eyebrow.

Mr. Holcomb did not immediately reply. It was up to him to show this stranger that the neighborhood was not unduly impressed by his coming among them. Not that there was anything personal or particular

in this disparagement, or even that disapproval was intended at all. But self-defence demanded that they, living out in the country, should render unto all cosmopolitans who came into their midst some of the

misery which all country people are made to feel when they enter into the precincts of the town. Thus it was that Mr. Holcomb was not precipitate in answering the man's question, but continued in his own occupation with a pointed sliver of wood in his hand.

"Well, you go right down the road here," he said finally, after Mr. Dewitt had demonstrated the flexibility of every feature on his face, "an' you'll come to a brown house."

"That's it right over there," said a barefoot boy of ten in torn and faded overalls, pointing to a structure hardly a stone's throw away.

Mr. Holcomb stopped and looked at the youngster. "Shut up!" he said dominantly. Direction giving, in Missouri, is a long and arduous business, and he was not going to have the artistry of his work marred by any such directness as the boy had manifested. He paused long, to allow his anger to cool. Then he began all over again.

"You go right down the road here and turn to the west, and first you'll see a brown house," he said, driving home his point impressively. "Well, you keep straight on past that there house, which is on your lefthand side, until you come to another brown house, on the other side of the road. See?"

"With yaller trimmings on it," added the storekeeper, standing in the doorway. This but tended to make more of the directions, and was not, like the intrusion of the boy, meant to curtail their length, and so the emendation was accepted by Mr. Holcomb.

“With yellow trimmings on it,” he agreed, nodding his head. “Well, you pass right by that house, too. See?” he continued.

“On the highway?” asked Mr. Dewitt, screwing round his head but keeping his eyes on the minister, and then distorting his nose for a moment. Mr. Holcomb paid no attention seemingly to the interruption, but concentrated on the arduous task before him.

“You pass right by that house, keeping on the main road, still going west, with the railroad off on the left about... how far do you reckon it is, Brother Holland, from the road to the railroad, right there?” Mr. Holcomb for a moment gave up the centre of the floor,

“Not more’n fifty foot, I reckon,” said that oracle, with the round face of his daughter visible over his shoulder.

“It’s ever bit of seventy-five foot if it’s a inch,” piped up Uncle John, abandoning the tale he had been trying to relate to the one lone man beside him.

“With the railroad off on your left about fifty foot,” resumed Mr. Holcomb pointedly, eyeing the stranger with severity, and holding up a finger at him. “Not more’n fifty foot. Then you’ll come to a

little rise in the road, with a lots of woods on your righthand side, and a old filling where the railroad used to go, that was tore up at the time of the war, for the rails; the other railroad, not the one on your left, notice. See?”

Mr. Holcomb waited, until Mr. Dewitt had reset one shoulder of his coat and nodded to show that he was following.

“And then there’s another little rise, on about fifty foot further on; just at the top of that rise on the lefthand side, you’ll see a house. And that’s it. See?” He leaned back with the air of a man safely home again, having ventured perilously, far afield. “You can’t miss it,” he said reassuringly, once more looking about for substantiation in his thesis.

“I take it,” said Mr. Dewitt, more briefly, “that it’s the second house on the left, eh?” He shot out his right cuff as he spoke, and seemed to be preparing to leave. Mr. Holcomb was unperturbed by the man’s directness.

“Third,” he corrected, shaking his head, as well as he could, as he reached far back into his mouth with two of his large fingers. “You forgot to count that there house on the corner, there,” he said finally, nodding to the gray weathered structure of boards at the bend in the road.

“Much obliged,” replied Mr. Dewitt, with a final fillip of his nose to Mr. Holcomb, and down the road he started, leaving behind him a subject of converse that would last far into the morning.

It was, of course, to Mr. Durnan’s house that he had been directed, and thitherwards now was he bendings his steps.

“Old bunch of country jakes,” said Mr. Dewitt to himself, derisively, as he walked along, putting into his stride something of the extreme variability manifest in

every other part of his being. He raised his hand to the diamond in his red tie. "Thank God I live in a city, anyway," he said fervently, and reached for a cigarette. Mr. Dewitt, be it said, hailed from Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

Down past the first brown house he went, and past the second brown house, with the yellow trimmings, on the opposite side of the road from the first one. From behind the front window shade, although he knew it not, peered one eye of Mrs. Kellogg, which followed thus his progress until his back was safely achieved, and then she issued upon her porch, and there, sitting with folded arms, on the top step, she safely got him inside the Durnan gate. House work be hanged when such a mystery as this was abroad in the land. Surmise and the adding of two and two were the occupations of Mrs. Kellogg for the nonce.

"Good morning, ma'am," said Prosperity blithely, as he saw the head and shoulders of Mrs. Durnan appear about the corner of an inner door in response to his knock on the post of the porch. In rural Missouri it is considered hardly decent for a woman to talk with a stranger. If, by reason of her husband's being absent, she must perforce parley with

a newcomer, she shows, by her extreme reticence, her sense of propriety. Thus, Mrs. Durnan approached no nearer than the back room, and volunteered no reply at all to his greeting, but looked at him blankly, darkly. Fortunately, Mr. Dewitt was familiar with the social usages of the region, and so was nothing abashed by

his reception. He winked, and twitched an elbow, and then spoke on.

“I hear you take boarders sometimes,” he said, wrinkling his nose like a rabbit. “Room and board.” Still there was no reply, only the woman swaying on her hip a baby invisible behind the edge of the inner door. “Can you take any more?”

“Well, I ain’t got no boarders at present,” said Mrs. Durnan at last, as two little Durnans came out from behind her and stood gazing at the man. There seemed something final about the remark, but Mr. Dewitt knew his woman, and went on.

“Well, can you take some, then?” he insisted, shoving back his hat, and leaning against the porch.

“Well, I don’t rightly know,” said Mrs. Durnan, slowly, yet with no particular sign of decision in her voice. “How many is there?”

“Four,” replied Mr. Dewitt, seemingly in the grip of a spasm. Mrs. Durnan continued to ponder, although evidently nothing daunted by the size of the contingent.

“And when would you want to come?” she continued in the same even tone, noncommittal, still considering.

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Yet Mr. Dewitt felt that things were coming his way. He mounted one step of the portico before he answered.

“Right away,” he replied, sniffing twice in quick succession. “You see, lady, it’s like this. We’re over here at the Fair grounds with a bunch of horses for the

paces, and we'd like to have a place to stay at." He paused, and ran a finger about his collar on each side.

"Well, I don't really know," mused Mrs. Durnan slowly, in a way that to you or to me would have seemed to indicate that she never, never would know. True it was, that last spring she had had unfortunate dealings with some race-horse men, who had boarded with her for a week and had then left without paying. Her next remark, on the other hand, led in the direction of ultimate acceptance of the strangers.

"How much would you be willin' to pay?" she asked still in a decorously uncertain manner. There must be nothing rashly eager about her taking in these aliens.

Mr. Dewitt made a mouth at her.

"Well, we generally pay about two dollars a week," he said.

Once more the effect of his words gave no outward change to Mrs. Durnan's countenance.

"Well," she finally opined, "I generally been gettin' two and a quarter." There was an air of finality about her words.

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"Includin' wash?" asked Mr. Dewitt quickly.

"Includin' wash," agreed the lady, with a gracious bend of her head, "and two sleepin' together."

"That's all right," nodded Mr. Dewitt, as though the terms under these circumstances were fair enough; and things seemed on the point of achievement between them. Then Mrs. Durnan tumbled the whole structure about their ears once more.

“Well, I don’t know as I can take in any strangers right now, like. You better see my husband,” she said.

“Is he abouts now?” asked Mr. Dewitt, squinting at her.

“No, he’s went into town in the wagon, and he won’t be back, I reckon, until long about noon,” she averred. “When did you want to come?”

“We’d a liked to a come to dinner,” continued Mr. Dewitt, little disturbed by the ups-and-downs of the negotiation. He knew now for a certainty that he and his associates were accepted, and further talk on the subject was only a matter of form.

“Well, I reckon as how that’d be all right,” went on Mrs. Durnan evenly. “And how long would you be here?” Her questions were still couched conditionally, but Mr. Dewitt was not misled thereby. Not that he was led into the mistake of too assuredly conceding final decision on his side, either. Their dealings might still end disastrously, if either of them showed signs of premature confidence.

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“Just till the fair begins,” he said, “just one week. ” Hastily he flicked a hand at his left ear.

“There’s my husband now, I do declare,” said Mrs. Durnan, as the wagon rattled past the house and halted beyond, for the opening of the yard gate. For the first time she issued from behind the semi-obscurity of the door jamb. “I guess it’ll be all right for you to come over at noon,” she quickly announced, inconsequentially.

Mr. Dewitt turned to look in the direction of the wagon. And as he did so, his whole face jerked awry and then came to a great calm, as he smiled widely at what he saw.

Mr. Dewitt, be it known, was a gentleman who, since his earliest childhood, had been connected with fairs, races, sideshows, booths, merry-go-rounds, carnivals, circuses, and other such occasions of the lighter and more festive side of human existence, leading a life which, while it tended to give one a gloomy outlook on mankind, did still develop a considerable sense of what may, for want of a better name, be called practical psychology. Just at present Mr. Dewitt was somewhat down on his luck, having inadvertently, at an Oklahoma fair two weeks before, yielded himself up into the notoriously fickle hands of Dame Fortune, which allured him in the shape of six spinning bright nickeled pointers revolving over an oilcloth arena where nickels, then dimes, then quarters, were placed and rewon, with usurious

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gains... or lost. He, who was on the inside of such games, and had himself stood croupier before now, and nightly counted up the incredible winnings to be made by standing at the paying side of such a contraption... he, to be taken in and thoroughly cleaned! And not only of his spare change, but also of his booth, where he had of late been reaping good money by letting the public try its luck at winning "electric lampoliers," as he had elegantly described them. These, fashioned in papier-maché after the form of sophisticated grown-up

kewpies, with wicked leers in their averted eyes and real hair on their heads, and real bits of veil over their brightly colored faces, and gorgeous frocks of purple crepe paper bordered in tinsel, had all slipped silently from his hands that night, almost before he realized the fact, and he had turned away from the lights, broke, clean broke. He had muttered some objurgations rich with those four-letter words with which, as Mr. Mencken has pointed out, the English language is so richly endowed. And the next morning, he had got a job with his old friends the race-horses, at the bottom of the ladder once again, or near it, from his point of view, which mean occupation was still his as he stood on the Durnan porch looking with pleased features towards Mr. Durnan and his colt. Be it said in passing that the fact of Mr. Dewitt's still possessing in his cravat a diamond of no mean size despite his impecuniosity is more to be attributed to the quality of that stone than to the flatness of his

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purse. In other words, he had been able to find none so low as to do it reverence in the form of moneys exchanged for possession of property.

"Funny animal, that," remarked Mr. Dewitt to Mrs. Durnan, with the heat lightning of his excitement running over his features. "Think he'd sell it?" He was gazing towards the centaur, and rapid calculations of its drawing power in the busy atmosphere of the concessions at the fair were filling his mind.

"No, I don't reckon he would," said Mrs. Durnan, looking sentimentally towards the creature. "We're

growing right attached to him now. How come, you to come back so soon, Jo?" she demanded, raising her voice.

Mr. Durnan vouchsafed no direct reply to her question other than to lay his whip sharply over the flanks of the centaur. "Git in there, damn you!" he said, and the fond attachment of which his wife had just spoken to Mr. Dewitt was not noticeably present in his tone. Since her little demonstration of conjugal unity had not been markedly successful, Mrs. Durnan excused herself to the stranger by remarking that she couldn't stand there gabbing no more, and entered the house. Mr. Dewitt raised and lowered his eyebrows three times, and then, with a fresh cigarette in his fingers, strolled down towards the stable yard.

He looked on with the noncommittal silence of an outsider as Mr. Durnan and his eldest son achieved

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the unharnessing of the two mares. The wrath in the older man's eye was apparent to everyone concerned, and neither Ben nor Mr. Dewitt ventured to call it down upon himself by speaking, although once or twice Mary and Belle incurred his displeasure by inadvertently moving when Mr. Durnan desired immobility, or by not "standing over" with the alacrity which that gentleman considered adequate. All the way home from town Mr. Durnan had been animadverting on the Reverend Holcomb's conception of what constituted prosperity in the eyes of the Lord, and had been averring to himself that he'd sell the dam thing for... for fifteen dollars, if he could find anybody

fool enough to take the dam thing. The dam thing had never brought him anything but a lot of dam trouble, anyhow, and damned if he wasn't gettin' dam sick and tired of it.

"Take him down," was all that he said to his son when the animals had been relieved of their accoutrement. "And take that there strap off'n him, too." He ignored the presence of the stranger, completely.

Mr. Dewitt nodded his head sharply about nothing, and flicked away the butt of his cigarette with an adept gesture. He sensed the situation, and held his tongue. This was not the time for bartering, with the atmosphere charged with anger of some sort, leading to blind stubbornness and hasty and rash decisions. He hummed a little tune and looked away, with unseeing eyes, towards Mount Liberty to the south.

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"You ain't a-goin' to sell him, are you, Pa?" demanded one of the young Durnans anxiously, as soon as Mr. Durnan entered the house. She had heard the remark of Mr. Dewitt, and been on tenter-hooks ever since.

"Yes, by God," replied her father promptly, relieving his feelings. He strode over and took a drink of water, letting the tin dipper splash back into the pail.

"How much'll he give fer him?" asked Mrs. Durnan, looking up from the peeling of potatoes preparatory to the augmented noon meal.

"Who?" asked Mr. Durnan fiercely, turning an angry gaze upon his wife. He was in no mood for any

nonsense.

“That man out there. Didn’t he tell you he wanted to buy?” she said, pointing in the general direction of the yard with her paring knife. Mr. Durnan sucked dry his moustache without answering, and then parted its unkempt breadth with the back of one rough forefinger. Still he deigned no reply to his wife. Somehow he must regain the self-respect lost on the corner of the Square, the dominance every male likes to feel within him, the mastery which he had been made to relinquish perforce to the Law. The disdainful insult of silence is as good a road as any to this resumption of power, and Mr. Durnan utilized it. Taking out his pipe from his pocket, he suffered an eructation with much

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dignity, and moved on towards the front room and the porch.

“Don’t you let him have him too cheap, now,” commanded Mrs. Durnan, in her turn striving for the resumption of a self-respect somewhat marred by Mr. Durnan’s silence before the stranger a while ago.

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Down in the pasture the education of the young centaur was progressing apace in the meanwhile. Straight down with the news of his prospective sale had raced Bill, aged nine, and Carry, one year his senior.

“Pa’s goin’ to sell you,” announced Bill breathlessly when the two youngsters had reached the gate and clambered through.

The animal looked at them dully, not comprehending the strange term they had used, and yet not wishing to confess his ignorance of its meaning.

“That man up there’s goin’ to take you,” added Carry.

“I don’t care,” replied the centaur.

“An’ Pa’s goin’ to git a pile of money for you, too,” continued Bill, “an’ then we’ll be rich. Won’t we, Carry! As rich as Mr. Albright, maybe, that owns the Mill.”

“I don’t care,” reiterated the centaur, only half-comprehending what it was all about, except that he felt that it was something that partially excluded him

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from its enjoyment. He had learned the trick from the other children, of taking the wind out of their sails by assuming an air of utter indifference towards something which to them seemed highly important.

“Well you’ll care all right when you get away from here and have to work and be just a ordinary work-horse, see if you don’t,” was the cheerful comeback of Bill, somewhat irritated by the centaur’s continued lack of appreciation of their news.

The centaur was wondering, vaguely, what was the trouble with the world this morning, that suddenly it seemed so alien to him, so harshly filled with the burs and thistles of intercourse. First had come, like a bolt from the blue, the episode of the strap, at which

memory he sickened and wanted to cry even now; then had come the whole hateful trip to town, with the prolonged agony of being tugged and pulled this way and that with the irritating strap, which had left his waist red and rubbed; then the miserable crowd at the Square, all pressing about him and filled with a spirit if not actively inimical at any rate showing no understanding. And now these two Durnan youngsters coming to triumph over him with some bit of news the full import of which he could not as yet fathom, but which seemed to bode him not well.

Suddenly he extended his hand and opened its palm. Within it lay a nickel, warm and sweaty from long grasping.

“Look at what I got,” he said.

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“Aw, where’d you get it?” exclaimed the two others instantly. “Who give it to you?”

“A man up on the Square.”

“What you goin’ to do with it?” demanded Bill anxiously.

“I don’t know. What’s it for?”

“Why, to buy things with, you nut I” exclaimed Carry. “Give it to me if you don’t want it.”

“No, he’s goin’ to give it to me, ain’t you, Dick!” clamored Bill.

“Naw, go on, Dick, and give it to me,” pressed Carry. “Go on, Dick, you know me.”

“No, Dick, you know me best, don’t you, Dick! Give it to me, Dick!” Bill pushed close.

This was sweet to the young animal, a triumph he had hardly known before, with the two young human beings close upon him, touching him, laying eager clamorous hands upon his body, and all the sweeter for its following so closely on the irritations of the morning. As he looked at them, suddenly a new light seemed to come into his eyes, half of fear, one would have said, with something of real tenderness, new to him, and a shyness, and yet a pride, which sent a thrill of conscious strength through his body.

“What you goin’ to do with it?” he asked Carry, while Bill seemed no longer to exist for him. The import of the question was not lost on the boy, and he instantly sensed the change in the young centaur’s spirit.

“Get some candy,” replied Carry, and she too had

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suddenly become shy and diffident, no longer asking for the coin, but willing to consider its acceptance if proffered. She was no longer looking at the centaur.

“Carry’s got a beau, Carry’s got a beau!” sang out Bill in a familiar rhythm, horribly insulting at the ages of eight to thirteen. If he was to be deprived of the joy of a nickel, at least there were other pleasures he could wreak from the episode.

“You shut up!” cried Carry, diving at him with her fists. The centaur grinned sheepishly. He was new to these matters, and did not know the full import of the term applied, but somehow he derived enjoyment from it.

“Leave her alone!” spoke the centaur with a show of authority. “Here, Carry, you can have it!” he added, extending his hand towards the maiden.

“I don’t want your old nickel!” she said contemptuously, tossing back her hair with a quick flash of her head. “You can keep it!” She seemed intent now only on a button at the back of her dress.

“Go on, take it. Here!” said the astonished centaur.

“I don’t want it,” she said, shrugging her shoulders in fine disregard of the wealth held out for her taking.

“Gee, give it to me, then!” said Bill.

“You shut up!” snapped the centaur. “Why don’t you want it, Carry? Here, I’ll give it to you.”

Something of anger seemed to stir the frame of the little girl.

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“I don’t want it, don’t I tell you! Keep your old nickel.” And again there came a fine display of her poor disheveled little hank of hair behind.

“Aw, girls is always like that,” muttered Bill philosophically, “they’re always gettin’ mad about something. Here, Dick, if you’ll give me the nickel, I’ll buy some candy, and I’ll give you half of it. Honest!”

But the young animal was obdurate. He shook his head and then sighed. Nothing he wanted so much on earth, now, as that Carry should have that nickel, and evidently she scorned him, was angry with him for some reason he could not, for the life of him, fathom, some reason which, he seemed to feel, implied a coarse inability on his part to enter into her finer sensibilities.

“What have I done, Carry?” he demanded imploringly of the incensed damsel, and in reply he had only a more pronounced turning of her back upon him and another fling of her head. He was distressed beyond measure.

“Well, I don’t want the old thing, neither, then,” declared the centaur, and raising his hand, he flung the precious bit of metal down the pasture. An old hen raced to gobble it up and then turned away in disgust when she saw what it was.

There was a moment’s pause, of sheer incredulity, before two pairs of heels went tearing down the pasture towards the spot where landed the coin.

“You leave that alone! He give it to me!”

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screamed Carry as she ran, grasping at her brother on the wing.

“Didn’t neither,” replied Bill. “You said you didn’t want it.”

Carry it was who first spied the recumbent nickel, however, and with a violent thrust aside at her younger relative she gained final possession of it. With flushed face she rose and pushed back her hair, no longer the proud and scornful creature she had been a moment before.

“I’ll go halvers with you on it,” suggested Bill. Carry hesitated. “All right for you, I’ll tell Lucy and Guy you got it, and they’ll *make* you give ’em some of it,” said Bill.

“All right, let’s go up to the store an’ get some candy now, huhn?” said Carry, all of a sudden chummy

in a big sister sort of way, offering to take Bill's hand. Nothing loath, he yielded, and the two of them started up the pasture together, intimately planning the morning's purchase.

"I got it all right, any way!" flung out Carry at the centaur contemptuously as she passed him by. He stood silently looking at her.

And even after the two children had left the pasture and crossed the tracks, the centaur stood gazing after them. On slow feet he went up and looked over the top of the gate, feeling more alone in the world than he had ever done. What it was all about, he did not know, but it was as though he was hungry and yet not hungry, uneasy with a strange discontent

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which he felt could know no assuagement until Carry was nice to him once again. She had somehow become a very important personage in the world, for him. He bent his head and rested his chin on his fists propped on the top of the gate. Thus he stood long, staring up towards "the house, while with slowly switching tail and an occasional lifted hoof he half-unconsciously kept the flies off his hindquarters.

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"I ain't so sure though as how I reckon to sell him," asserted Mr. Durnan to Mr. Dewitt, as the two gentlemen walked down through the yard in the direction of the pasture. The centaur, still standing in his day-dream by the gate, awoke to their presence,

and turned wearily to go down out of sight among the trees.

Mr. Dewitt gulped an invisible mouthful of something, touched his diamond, and looked after the creature as it trotted slowly down the gentle slope, hands joined behind its back.

Now, considering the fact that Mr. Durnan's progress from town not half an hour ago had been one continued asseveration of his intention to sell the creature as soon as ever he could, his announced dubiety as to his intention on that score, to the very first purchaser who presented himself, may come as something of a shock. There had been no formally registered vow, to be sure, nor had Mr. Durnan even

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thought it within the bounds of the probable that he ever could find a buyer for the beast, but yet he had, be it confessed, several times consigned himself to eternal perdition, in the contingency of his not actually selling the animal, as he rode out from town, and certainly he had abundantly expressed the low estimate he held of the centaur as a property possession.

"He ought to fetch a right smart sum, now, I guess, don't you think?" he asked the stranger, as they let themselves through the second gate. "Come here, Dick, come along now."

"Hold old is he?" demanded Mr. Dewitt, in noncommittal reply to Mr. Durnan's question. His eyebrows gave two vertical leaps and then returned to their position.

“Goin’ on six months,” replied Mr. Durnan. “He was foaled the end of March. Here, Dick. Hang the animal, why don’t he come!”

“What you figurin’ on doin’ with him?” asked Mr. Dewitt, making a face as though he smelled some evil smell.

“Goin’ to work him,” said Mr. Durnan, calmly expectorating in front of him. “Someday that there animal is goin’ to be worth as much as a horse and a man together here on the place. Ever stop to think about that?”

Mr. Dewitt sniffed, and cocked his hat further forward over his eyes.

“Little young for all that, ain’t he?” he said.

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“Hardly do to work him much; that is to say, till he’s round about two year old, I should fancy.”

“Well, long about two,” granted Mr. Durnan, nodding his head.

Something was evidently going on in Mr. Dewitt’s mind which did not actively manifest itself to the other man. He stooped for a stalk of grass, which he began to shred automatically between his teeth. What the something was may best be realized if it is recalled how recently Mr. Dewitt had descended into the very depths of impecuniosity, and had accepted his present menial task with horses, and, consequently, how low must be the present state of his finances. No actual figures for the purchase of the animal had thus far been named between the two men, but Mr. Dewitt was pretty sure, even before he asked, that they could not

but exceed the sum of three dollars and seventeen cents, which represented his present total wealth. Visions of money to come flowing in later were his, as he considered the possibilities of the strange creature before him, in the form of ticket money in a concession going about from fair to fair. The animal would be a gold mine, Mr. Dewitt was telling himself. The problem, you will see, was how to obtain possession of the gold mine without having on the moment to compass too large a cash deposit. Some form of tent or enclosure would be necessary, as would also a sign to advertise the wonder, and the fair authorities would demand a considerable fee for the concession privilege. But with

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these preliminary difficult hurdles out of the way, the money would begin simply to roll in, as Mr. Dewitt pictured it to himself. The little motions of his face and body grew positively rhapsodic as he considered the possibilities of the case.

“He’ll be a considerable expense to you in the meantime, won’t he?” asked Mr. Dewitt, screwing round his chin into his left shoulder. “Not particular,” averred Mr. Durnan, well acquainted with this dodge in the horse-selling game, of course, which sent the price of horses and mules downward every winter, when the price of food became an element to be dealt with. “He’s already beginnin’ to work some, you see, light little jobs like Saturday, for instance, when he was helpin’ me and two of my boys gettin’ in the June corn off’n the east field over there. After that’s through

with, he'll help a little with the hay and the fodder, and so on, all winter."

The two men had by this time reached the lower end of the pasture, down near the trees surrounding the little pool. The young centaur was standing leaning pensively against one of the willows, gazing with unseeing eyes down into the water, his head resting on one hand as his elbow was propped against the bark of the tree.

"Carry," he whispered to himself, solemnly, and then again, "Carry!"

That was all. He sighed, and then, looking up saw the men, and smiled at them a little sheepishly, wondering

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if they had heard him pronounce the magic name.

"Well, I tell you, Mr...." Mr. Dewitt stumbled over the name of the man, which he could not at the moment bring to his tongue. He blinked his eyes and brought up his mouth as far as possible to meet them, and then went on. "I tell you. I got a proposition to make to you that will be for both our advantage." Mr. Durnan did not leap to throw his arms about his benefactor's neck, having before this heard such words, and sometimes as prelude to most predatory proposals. He spat, and remained with eyes fixed on the ground.

"The proposition is this," continued Mr. Dewitt, shaking his head as though he had a bug in his ear. "I'll be quite frank with you. I took a liking to you just as soon as I laid eyes on you, awhile ago, and I says to

myself, I says, 'Yonder's a man, Barney Dewitt,' I says, 'as you can do business with.' Just like that I says to myself. And what's more, I think I can."

Mr. Dewitt paused as if this were a challenging statement, and anyone looking at the conversation from a distance, without hearing the actual words, would have thought that he was demanding an instant reply to a decisive question. Still Mr. Durnan was considering the verdure of the pasture under his feet. Mr. Dewitt shoved back his hat with a rapid gesture and went on.

"What's more," he said, "it ought to prove a proposition

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that'll put ready money in both our pockets... and it ain't goin' to cost you yourself one red cent. What do you say to that, Mr....?" It was difficult to be effective in his climax, having forgotten the name of the man who had so favorably impressed him so short a time previously; yet nothing disheartened, Mr. Dewitt nodded and once again waited for the decisive word, which did not come. Mr. Dewitt's hat now revisited the frontal portion of his skull, while, with a slight tendency to wriggle with his enthusiasm, the man himself pushed closer under the downcast eyes of Mr. Durnan, and continued.

"I got a scheme that'll put you on easy street for years to come, while returning to Bernard Dewitt, Esquire, also a neat little sum of which I shall not complain. You won't have to turn your hand over, Mr.... not turn your hand over. All you have to do is to

sit back and draw in the filthy lucre, which'll come in as regular as clockwork, I can promise you that, with never a thought or a worry on your part as to your share in the scheme. That's what I'm going to suggest to you Mr.... Mr.... What do you say to it?"

At last the lethargy of Mr. Durnan was broken by this direct appeal for his word, and, having expertly rid himself of his accumulated tobacco juices, he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and spoke.

"I don't mind tellin' you that I've heared things like this before, and they ain't always worked out

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the way you expect 'em to. I ain't never lost no money myself. But I did send off fifty dollars for some stock in a 'Lake o' Fortune' out in Nevady a couple of years back, that ain't begun to pay dividends on its borax yet. I wrote a letter to 'em about a year since, but they hain't never answered it."

Mr. Dewitt once again altered the tilt of his hat to the back of his head, touched his chin to his right shoulder, and seriously continued.

"You got me wrong, Mr...." he said, easily. "Suppose that I suggest to you that you rent me that colt of yours over there, and I'll take him off your hands until you get ready to work him, say in eighteen months from now? I'll pay you a good rent for him, and take the best of care of the animal, seeing as how I'm in the business of looking after horses, you know. I'll guarantee to put that animal back in your barn in better shape than he is right now. How will that strike you?"

“What would you be using him for?” demanded Mr. Durnan warily.

“For show purposes, Mr.... purely for show purposes,” said Mr. Dewitt, adroitly knocking his hat over his eyes again, with a single touch to the rearward brim. “I been in the show business for going on sixteen years, now, and when it comes to the show business, I know what’s distinctly what. And I want to tell you, Mr.... I want to tell you that, properly handled, as I *can* handle it, that colt of yours there would be a dead sure ringer, in a

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snappy kind of little exhibit such as I can rig up. It’d take expert handling, you understand, on account of not everybody being attracted by that sort of thing and all that. I travelled once with a six-legged pig, and would you believe me, we hardly made expenses out of the thing, because the gentleman as owned it, who was, like yourself, in the farming line, didn’t know how to handle a show of that kind. That’s the reason why I wouldn’t suggest you to attempt a thing of that sort yourself, you understand.”

“What’d you be willing to pay for the rent of a creature like that?” asked Mr. Durnan, trying however to look as little interested as possible.

Mr. Dewitt shoved back his hat, hunched his coat collar, and moistened his right forefinger. He was waxing warmer, now, he knew, and the very crux of the matter was at hand. Within him he had already determined that he could afford as high as fifteen dollars a week on the animal and still stand a good

chance of making excellent money out of the proposition. But of that determination he did not intend immediately to apprise Mr. Durnan. That gentleman would have been dumbfounded could he have known that exactly his own self-announced price of irrevocable sale, as he was coming homewards, was the weekly rental considered by Mr. Dewitt as being within the bounds of the financially possible.

“That’s a fair question,” said Mr. Dewitt, while all his features rushed together as if for rapid consultation

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and then sprang back into place. “That’s a fair question. But let me ask you a question or two first. You say you’d want to work that colt when he comes two year old. Now I’d take him for the full eighteen months between now and then. And what’s more, I want you to understand that you’d not have one moment of worry on the subject of him, not from the minute he left you till he comes walkin’ back in that gate in excellent shape. Now under those terms, I’d just like to ask you what you would consider a fair price for the rent of the animal.”

Mr. Durnan’s mind was black, at that moment, with swollen ideas of monetary gain to be wreaked from this stranger. If this man wished to come before him with a red tie on, and a diamond as big as his thumbnail, and talk business, why then, that stranger could take the consequences. Mr. Durnan went momentarily dizzy with the wild scheme that whirled into his planning consciousness. He would demand an impossibly high sum from the man, and then gradually

work down to the very highest figure which he could screw from him. He had certain compunctions as he opened his lips to speak, but these he quieted with the consideration that he would give five cents a week more towards the support of the Church.

“I won’t take a cent less than six bits a week for him,” said the old scoundrel, brazenly looking his man squarely in the eye.

Mr. Dewitt did not, for a moment, take in the import

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of Mr. Durnan’s words. Then he looked away, and a smile was hidden in the quick collocation of activities that stirred his face.

“Six bits?” he seemed to ponder aloud. “Well, I reckon I could stand that, although I’d rather you’d said sixty cents.” It was a marvelous display of self-control on the part of the man, who wished really that he could spring leaping into the air to express his jubilation.

“No, sir, not a cent less than six bits. Take it or leave it, at six bits a week,” rejoined Mr. Durnan, insolently spitting, to show his uttermost contempt for the suggestion of a lower figure. Be it granted, that his too, was a fine bit of restrained acting, for he had only a moment before been looking upon his suggestion as a shameless attempt to jack the man up into indecent heights of payment, and he would have liked now to be grinning and outwardly manifesting his pleasure.

“Six bits is a heap of money every week, Mr...” said Mr. Dewitt, starting up towards the house, where he wished to get Mr. Durnan’s signature safely

attached to some form of contract. "I think I could perhaps manage to make it, but considering you're going to get out of..."

"Well, you say yourself as you think you can manage it at that figure," broke in Mr. Durnan, joining the man in his progress up the pasture. "An' if you'd like to consider the proposition settled, you'd better..."

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"Suppose I'd pay you for the first week right now," blandly suggested Mr. Dewitt, elevating his left elbow to the horizontal and then dropping it. He thrust his right hand into his trousers pocket and looked at Mr. Durnan.

"Wouldn't care if you did," acknowledged Mr. Durnan, and for the first time, with the question so nearly settled, he allowed himself to grin a little with inward elation.

"Done!" said Mr. Dewitt, as he popped the three quarters into Mr. Durnan's hand, almost before the owner of the centaur had fully got his hand out of his overalls slant pocket. "An' of course we can sign some sort of paper up at your house," he added, hunching his coat collar, and still very firm and businesslike.

Mr. Durnan cast a quick eye at the three bits of silver in his hand, and then took out a worn and voluminous leather wallet from his pocket, with antique nickel fastenings almost massive enough for a portmanteau. There were folded greasy papers and a bit of hoarded string in the first section, an Indian arrow-head and a stub of an abused lead pencil in the second, but when he snapped open the third, there

were evident one crumpled dollar bill, one silver half-dollar, and three copper cents, constituting Mr. Durnan's present ready money. He dropped the three quarters into this compartment, brought together the three metal stubs which formed

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the fastening of his purse, and, having snapped them into security, stowed away his property.

"That old pocketbook has seen a heap o' service in its time," he smiled, rather self-consciously. But Mr. Dewitt, man of affairs, having now concluded his business in hand, only shifted his hat to normal, like a flag signal "Cease Firing," and walked up towards the gate in silence. He had other things to worry him.

"It does beat everything I ever did hear of," said Mr. Durnan to himself when Mr. Dewitt had left him. "Six bits a week! That's, let's see, a dollar 'n a half ever two weeks, and three dollars a month. And twelve threes is thirty-six. Thirty-six dollars a year, and shut of the keep of him. Not so rotten!" mused Mr. Durnan, trying not to grin, feeling himself something of a financier, rather pleased over his breaking into big business. It wouldn't make him "independent rich," of course, but it was a sight of money even at that. "And the Reverend said it'd happen! That stumps me! It beats ever' thing I ever did hear tell of!" He ruminated over his good fortune, rubbing his hand over his roughened chin, already beginning to take on the blackness which would culminate next Sunday morning, when once more he would reap its horrid tough crop. "And to think it's all come about through

that there colt, one way and the other, both the ups and the downs of it. It's the hand of God, that's what it is."

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Mr. Durnan's walk and general manner when he entered the house was reminiscent of the gait of Mr. Albright, the banker in town, as close an approximation as Mr. Durnan could muster. New dignity sat on his shoulders, although he also felt rather foolish, having such good tidings to break to his wife. Wiped out completely was the shame of the episode on the Square that morning, a thing forgotten, a feature in his landscape blotted quite away by the looming bright hill of his opulence to be.

"Ella," said Mr. Durnan, as he came into the presence of his wife, "I guess you needn't worry about that kid you're goin' to have. You can have twenty from now on, if you want 'em. We're goin' to be on easy street."

"My God, Jo, what you mean?" replied Mrs. Durnan, looking up.

He paused before he spoke, with unconscious rhetorical power.

"The Reverend was right," he said. "The hand of the Almighty has been raised for us, and... well, I've rented out the colt, that's all." He fumbled with the old leather wallet as he spoke, and from its depths he extracted a fifty-cent piece. "There, old lady," he added, tossing it awkwardly into her lap, "go and git yourself something with that."

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The actual transfer of the property was not to take place, naturally, until the opening of the Fair

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next Monday. Mr. Dewitt had not objected to paying the extra week, seeing that the sum involved was so slight, and also considering the danger of having the prodigy snapped up by some other wide-awake showman who might happen to see the thing. His first concern, after the rough contract had been signed between them, was to have the colt placed in the lowest pasture, out of sight of the highway and also beyond the view of the passengers in the trains which passed here twice each day in each direction. He wished the days of the free view of his exhibit to be ended as expeditiously as possible. He could hardly hope, he realized, to draw in as much money in this vicinity as he would later make, since so many people hereabouts had already grown familiar with the sight of the centaur, but still he naturally wished to sell as many admission tickets as possible.

He kept his present job with the horses, for this week, at least, as he would need all the money he could lay his hands on, in order to set up his new exhibit. He was busy planning on a thousand and one details, which his active imagination sent swarming upon him, and which must be manoeuvred with all the adroitness of a woman, seeing that he had no cash with which to accomplish them. Even as he walked hurriedly back to the Fair grounds, twitching his head and changing the lie of his garments, he had figured

out where he was going to get hold of a stretch of old canvas that would exactly suit his purposes for screen to put around his exhibit. As he

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entered the shed to tell his companions that all was settled as to their room and board, he was wrestling with the problem of tickets or no tickets. Tickets undoubtedly looked “classier,” but they cost money, and he thought that, for the first week, at least, he would get on without them, simply standing, himself, at the entrance to his booth, acting as outside barker and doorman and official explainer inside, all three. It looked cheap, but he was going to have a tight squeeze to get through at all, the first weeks, he figured, and could not insist on style from the very beginning. “But later on, I’m certainly going to strut my stuff!” he promised himself.

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To his friend, Mr. Carr, the philosophical carpenter, Daniel took his troubled problem on the subject of education. Mr. Carr was short and thin, and wore gold-rimmed glasses, and was generally unprepossessing in his looks, except that he wore what his wife was proud to say were the largest moustaches in Roosevelt. From both sides of his head they flowed back, when he was walking into a stiff wind, as though they had been a silken drapery caught across his upper lip. What had originally caused him to cultivate so overpowering an adornment can never be said, but since his earliest

days steel had never been applied to their length except by way of the very slightest adjustment towards symmetry. He was perhaps the last man in the state

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to use a moustache cup for the taking of his coffee, with a little porcelain guard set across one portion of the rim to exclude his moustaches from the liquid. Out along his shoulders these adornments usually extended themselves, although they sometimes momentarily dropped down as he stooped to a measurement on a board, and interfered with his work. On such occasions he was very patient with them, gently laying them back where they belonged. Mr. Carr did not, for companionship, smoke a pipe; he stroked his whiskers, as though they had been two cats. With them, Mr. Carr would have been content on Robinson Crusoe's island, and never felt himself alone.

"I don't like to go away and leave the family," said Daniel, as he finished sawing through a plank.

"What do you advise me to do, Mr. Carr?"

"I never give advice," promptly replied that gentleman sententiously, laying a pontifical hand first on one whisker and then on the other. "What seems to be your difficulty?"

"I don't know," replied the boy, "it just don't seem right to desert 'em all out there, and go off and get my education, and them all without any."

"Take up your cross and follow me," quoted Mr. Carr, waving an admonitory finger at the boy. "You'll be a fool if you don't. Mark my words, when that call comes, it is up to you to leave father and mother and

brothers and sisters, and even husband or wife. In the midst of disorder, be a centre of order, my boy. I never give advice, but you must

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do as I bid you now. Perform the duty that lies nearest to you.”

He bent once more to the measurement of the board before him.

“Your father’s a fool,” he broke out a moment later. “I know him. He’s one of those Holy Rollers out there, under that man Holcomb. Who’s a fool too. This town’s full of fools. If ever I find myself agreeing with any of the people in this town, I know right away I’m wrong.”

Daniel laughed.

“What about my getting my education here, then?” he asked.

“Your father disapproves of it, don’t he?” snapped Mr. Carr. “And so does that Holcomb! That proves it. It’s right. You can laugh all you want to, but I know what I’m talking about. You go to school.”

He picked up his saw with determination, and attacked the plank lying prone before him.

“In the age that is now coming,” said Mr. Carr, stopping and talking like one who spoke with authority, “knowledge is to be a most valuable and necessary thing. Therefore in all thy getting, get understanding. I refer, of course, to the age of Aquarius, or the Water-bearer. We are just issuing out of the age of Virgo, the virgin. Christ was born of the Virgin... Christ, the lamb of God, or Aries, the ram,

whose sign stands in quadrature with that of Virgo.” Here Mr. Carr laid down his saw, and

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on the white surface of a faced board he drew a rough semblance of the zodiac, with a circle and the twelve signs in their order. With crosses he pointed off the two which he had designated.

“Notice the position, likewise, of Pisces, the fish, denoting the feet or the lowliest part of the body. Christ himself came on earth and walked with the lowliest of men, who were themselves fishermen. Note also, the early use of the fish as the symbol of Christ. Did these things ever strike you before? I dare say they did not. I am opening to you doors of wisdom, my boy, the secret doors of great wisdom.”

Here Mr. Carr stopped and sighed, soothed his two moustachios with a gentle gesture, and then continued. The man seemed to be pouring forth a revelation that must be spoken before he went on with his work. That was how he too envisaged himself.

“The new age is to be that of Aquarius, the water-bearer,” he continued, making a check at the appropriate point in the circle. “The water-bearer is to bring the great solvent, knowledge, which is to fuse all wisdom into one, and explain the secrets of the world. Notice that next to Virgo stands Scorpio which represents those secrets which the water-bearer is to solve for all men. Just as the lamb of God, Aries, brought equality of men into the world... notice Libra, the even scales,... and also the equality of man and God, we must not forget, so the new dispensation is to

have the strength of the bull, Taurus, and the power of Leo, the lion. These are

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arcana, my boy," he said, wistfully, dropping his brow as though it were too heavy with wisdom to be borne upright, "and are hidden from the common people. But I think that they prove my point that knowledge and schooling are necessary in the age which we are even now stepping into. Go on with your schooling.

"See?" said Mr. Carr in conclusion, and Daniel nodded his head. Which was a lie, for he very distinctly did not see, and he knew it. But this was all the advice the boy gained that day from Mr. Carr. He understood but little of what the man told him, and of that little he bore away but a scant concern, but still, somehow, the wider horizons which the curious thinker opened to his vision had a marked influence on the boy, and not for the worse. They revealed to him, more vividly perhaps, than some more scholarly performance would have done, the fact that there were circles outside the little interlacing rings of Roosevelt, interests beyond the tight little curriculum of Mr. Brough and his cohorts at the high school, and they gave to the boy a modicum of that wonder in the face of the universe, which perhaps is all that was meant by the fear of the Lord, which was set at the doorway of wisdom. The pundits of the town would have pooh-poohed his learning, and would in anxiety have jerked the boy out of the rays of his influence if they could have known the pernicious nonsense he was distilling in

the boy's presence; the boy himself, miraculously enough, took what honey there was, and let the poison go.

One remark of the man, however, Daniel did carry away with him that evening when he went home, and it proved a bit of leaven which worked much in his spirit and helped to shape his soul to the fine thing which it became.

"I haven't much use for your Doctor Bissell," Mr. Carr had said, speaking of the president of the University. "He may be learned and all that, and he may be able to write a lot of letters behind his name which I don't know the meaning of, and, what's more, don't care. My point is this, my boy. If a man knows a vast deal, and it is good stuff, it'll come out on him, so that all men will see it, and then he won't need all those letters trailing along behind his name. And if what he knows don't show on him, why then, he ought to be ashamed to parade all the labels they've stuck on him, and it's only a vain show. No, your Doctor Bissell may be an educated man... but he's not human. He's not human, that's it. Many are born, Daniel, but few are human." And with this cryptic conclusion, he brushed aside his whiskers carefully and went back to work again with his saw.

The seed fell on fallow ground, and, as the boy started home half an hour later, he was determining within him that, with all his schooling, he would become

human. And then he fell into cogitation as to the meaning of the word, wondering to whom, in all Roosevelt, the term could be applied.

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There was a moon that night, and, hearing the low sound of the centaur's singing in the lower pasture, Daniel left the house and went down to see the creature. Supper had passed off in an excited sort of tumult, what with the newcomers at the table, and Mr. Durnan's experience in the Square that morning, beside a bottle of vanilla extract surreptitiously imbibed behind the barn, in jubilation over the financial arrangements between Mr. Dewitt and himself, which, for the present, by the way, were to be kept hidden. The strong aroma of the stable which the men brought with them from the Fair grounds was but little noticeable in the Durnan household, where such matters were habitual. In a lull of the general talk, one of the young Durnans had triumphantly announced to Daniel that the high school had opened today, and had chanted the statement that "Daniel didn't go, Daniel didn't go." Thereupon, in a sudden access of fury, he had said he *was* going tomorrow. His father, filled with the contentment of his newly stipulated wealth and the secret workings of the vanilla, had turned to the boy and merely grumbled, "Well, go to school and be damned. See if I care." Then the man had turned to recount a purely fictitious bit of repartee with which he had

given a final quietus to the Law up there on the Square, and Daniel had slipped away to seek quiet in the moonlight.

He found the centaur strangely excited, with brightened eyes and something of an electric intensity about him. He was moving restlessly about among the low scrub oaks and rank autumn weeds of the bottom pasture, and turning sharply every once in a while, as though he heard something off among the trees at the side. Then he would stop his low crooning for a moment and wait breathlessly. His quick ear had detected the boy's approach even when Daniel had passed through the upper gate, but after looking sharply to see who it was, the centaur shook his head irritably, and trotted further away. This was something new, and Daniel wondered what it meant.

The boy came down and threw one leg over the ramshackle fence, and waited. Thousands of insects were vocal in the night air all through the pastures and the woods, crickets and katydids and peepers innumerable, which fell silent in a circle about the boy when he first came into their midst, and then gradually took up their endless song again as he became motionless. One barely noticed their shrill voices at this season of the year, they were so insistent, so ubiquitous in the country. They grew to be a substratum of sound hardly figuring in one's consciousness, like the weight of the atmosphere we bear forever about with us without worrying. Daniel

was listening only to the intermittent humming of the centaur as he moved ceaselessly about from place to place, peering, questing, dissatisfied.

Finally the creature came and placed himself near the boy, but with his attention still alert on the far corners of the pasture, where his eyes roved constantly, and where he seemed from time to time to hear something interesting.

“What are you hunting for?” asked Daniel finally, in a low voice.

The centaur listened intently and bent his body to look searchingly off to the right before he answered.

“I keep thinkin’ I hear ’em,” he said, not relaxing his vigilance of the far trees even while he spoke.

“There, hear that?” he gasped in excitement, pointing with one outstretched finger towards the south. Daniel listened but could distinguish nothing.

“Oh, I wish they’d let me play with ’em!” sobbed the centaur, turning away. Then he listened once more, and laughed lightly, although still with a sob in the laugh. “I never knew they was there before,” he explained briefly, “but, gee, I can hear ’em tonight all right.” His hand grasped the top rail of the fence, and the boy could see that he was quivering.

“Who are they?” whispered Daniel, catching something of the eagerness of the creature, and straining his eyes into the moonlight.

“Sh!” said the other quickly. Then, lunging forwards

he galloped full tilt down the pasture, and the boy could hear his hoofs among the underbrush and dry fallen branches. Then there was silence, and the centaur seemed to be waiting. Finally he came walking disconsolately back, pausing sometimes to linger and turn his upper torso for a backward glance.

“No use, I guess,” he said. “I don’t see what they want to act that way for, though. Gee!”

“Who are they?” asked Daniel again, a little put out by the continued reticence of the creature.

“They’re some girls,” replied the other seriously, “an’ I can hear ’em laughin’ an’ playin’, just as plain, an’ they always run away an’ won’t let me play with ’em.”

“Aw!” remonstrated Daniel. His first thought was that perhaps some of those loose creatures down by the Mill had come up with some friends into the woods, and were indulging in play, the innocence of which was less than doubtful. Often they had called out to him as he had been passing their houses, and their open brazen solicitation of his notice had sent the boy on his way blushing indignantly. They, too, were all members of the Holy Roller congregation.

But those girls would never have been so silent about their buxom play with their swains. Daniel still had heard nothing, and seen nothing, of the phenomena which were working havoc on the peace of mind of the young centaur.

“I can just nearly see ’em, sometimes,” said the

latter, lifting one fore-hoof and bending down to extract a rock from the frog of it. "An' the same way with hearin' 'em. It just seems to me I can almost hear 'em as plain as anything."

"Maybe they're from the other time, too," suggested Daniel, referring back to the mythical period that the centaur had told him about last night.

"Sure they are!" replied the centaur, letting down his hoof and looking at the boy almost with disgust at having even to mention so obvious a fact. "I knew that right away! They're wood nymphs, that's what they are. Dryads they call 'em. And water nymphs from the stream over there. That's naiads. Oh, I know 'em all right." He spat meditatively.

"And you never saw 'em before tonight?" asked Daniel.

The centaur shook his head.

"Not this time. I'd forgot I'd ever seen 'em. I used to see 'em all the time, before. I never thought of 'em again though, till this afternoon. Say, Daniel," suggested the creature, haltingly, turning to look at the boy, "you won't tell Carry, will you, that I been seein' these girls down here?"

"Carry?" asked Daniel, wonderingly. "What's she got to do with it?"

"Aw, nothing," replied the centaur, and his tail began to flash nervously from side to side. He looked at Daniel and then looked away, and then looked back again, sheepishly, and laughed softly. "I give her a nickel today," he said, not quite accurate in his facts, be it confessed. Suddenly Daniel realized

strongly that it was only a young boy that he was talking to.

“You did!” he answered. “Where’d you get it?”

“A man give it to me, up on the Square,” said the centaur.

Daniel laughed.

“And you gave it to Carry?” he repeated. “What’d you do that for? Why didn’t you keep it?”

“Well, they was both askin’ me for it, her ’n Bill, an’ so I give it to her.”

“Why didn’t you give it to Bill?”

“Aw, shucks,” said the centaur, and once more he laughed softly, and turned away. “Don’t you think...” he gulped the rest of his question.

“Don’t I think what?” asked Daniel.

“Nothin’,” replied the centaur dreamily, edging closer to the boy. Daniel waited.

“Don’t you think Carry’s the prettiest girl you ever seen?” went on the animal, in a low voice.

Daniel raised his head and laughed aloud into the moonlight.

“You shut up!” snapped the centaur. And suddenly Daniel felt the young animal pressing full against him and two strong hands had grasped him about the throat.

“Cut that out!” he gasped, bent far back, with his knee pinned against the fence by the chest of the colt. He was powerless to move.

“Say she is!” insisted the centaur, ducking the boy backwards, and leaning over him.

“I won’t!” replied Daniel, grasping at the fingers

of the creature, and then trying to gain a hold on the fence with his hands. "You let me go. You hear?"

"You say she is! She is!" reiterated the centaur.

Then the grip of the short stubby fingers relaxed, and the animal had stepped back, arms akimbo, with perplexed forehead.

"I didn't want to hurt you, Daniel, 'cause you're her brother," he said hurriedly, willing to make friends.

The boy straightened himself, and took his leg from the top of the fence.

"You keep your hands off of me, next time," he said to the creature. And with that, he turned away, and walked up through the moonlight towards the house.

Down in the pasture, the centaur still stood in the same position, feeling more rebuffed than he had ever been. He tried to turn away, but something held him riveted where he was. Dryads and water nymphs all forgotten, he kept his eyes on the one light visible in the Durnan house.. Then a little whine of sorrow escaped from him, and he went over to the gate. The fastenings were still too much for him to manipulate, and he moved along the fence, looking for a place where perhaps he might jump it. It was useless, the man-made barriers were effective in their holding him where he was.

"Carry!" he cried gently into the night, up toward the house.

Then he wheeled, weeping bitterly, and galloped

down to the lower end of the pasture. And it seemed to him that the trees were filled with a mocking,

tantalizing laughter, while the gentle night wind waved the branches of the willows, and threw soft shadows that were like delicate creatures running hither and yon to hide from him.

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There was much doing in the Durnan household that week. The next morning, Daniel went in to work at the usual hour, but instead of tying on his apron, he merely made application to the boss to be laid off from his regular schedule, and to be allowed to show up at two-thirty every afternoon, so that he could attend the high school. The man to whom he applied was a short individual who actually did chew tobacco, with slow rhythmic movements of his jaw, and did not merely hold it quiescent in one swollen cheek as do most users of the weed after this style.

“So you want to turn round and go to high school, do you?” replied Mr. Poore, making use of his favorite circumlocution, in this case most aptly named. No one ever did anything, according to him, without first “turning round.”

“Yes sir,” said Daniel. “I’m going to live at home and come in every day, and they’ll give us plenty of study periods to get all my lessons in school, and I’ll be out by two-thirty. Saturdays I can work all day, just the same, if you want.”

Mr. Poore chewed his tobacco in silence a moment.

“Well, I guess we can manage to turn round and do it, Dan,” he finally opined, and walked away, his hands cocked up behind him under his coat tails.

Mr. Carr, preternaturally solemn, as usual, merely bowed to Daniel in somewhat formal manner when the boy announced to him his intention, and silently went on with his work. Daniel stood about awkwardly for a few minutes, watching the older man.

“Well, I guess I had better be getting on down to the school,” he said finally. “Good-bye, Mr. Carr. See you this afternoon.”

Once more the philosopher merely declined his head, his two moustachios bending like twin acolytes performing a genuflection.

A visit to the pompous office of pompous little Mr. Brough, the superintendent, who always looked as solemn, but not so impressive, as Mr. Carr, and a visit to the drug store on the Square, where secondhand school books were available, hasty arrangements with fellow-students for the use of books until Daniel could make further purchases when he got his pay next Saturday, and lo, the boy had plunged into the last year of his high school career. The magic possibility over which he had been pondering for months had rapidly slipped into the realm of the actual, almost before he was aware of it. He smiled to himself over the rapidity of its achievement, and thought how pleased Mrs. Delacourt would be to know of the final arrangement.

Mr. Dewitt was perhaps the busiest man of the group that week, as he went about, winking at Fair

officials, and shaking his head at men and women acquaintances of his, from whom he extracted an assiduous series of loans. First there was the matter of the fifteen dollars exacted by the powers that be, for the privilege of displaying his show on the grounds during the progress of the Fair. The accumulation of this sum dragged on but slowly during the course of the week, with a dollar here, and two dollars there, even including a quarter grudgingly bestowed by the colored boy in the old blue sweater, who hung about the grounds in the hope of picking up an odd penny without too much physical exertion. Mr. Dewitt found a nickel lying in the dust, and considered this a sign of good luck. The sum was not completed until Saturday, when some of his more opulent friends from happier days began to drop into the grounds with their concessions, having come on from the fair over at Muskogee, just ended. That sense of practical psychology, previously mentioned, stood Mr. Dewitt in good stead now, and before sundown he had paid his fifteen dollars and got his receipt.

Also, he had made arrangements for the length of canvas, which he was to borrow every morning from his successor at the stall of disingenuous kewpies, where it served to protect those frail ladies from the night air and marauding hands while their

dispenser slept. Mr. Dewitt was to return it each evening after the feverous night session of the Fair had ended.

He himself, in the course of the week, had, in a far corner of one of the buildings, found a discarded bit of bunting, about ten feet in length. From this, with the aid of needle and thread bestowed by Jim Durnan in return for divers little witticisms and other attentions Mr. Dewitt fashioned a single panel, about five feet by three in size, with a seam down the centre. The material had originally been white, but was now soiled into gray, and had broken out, here and there, with an irregular rash of dark mildew. These flecks rather bothered Mr. Dewitt until, with a pot of black paint, which he discovered on a shelf in the Durnan barn, he set about devising a sign adequately setting forth the peculiar charms of the centaur. The flecks of mildew he now cleverly utilized as part of the dappled coat of the animal depicted. In order to get all the mildew within the outline of the creature he was limning, he gave, perforce, a somewhat strained attitude to the young creature, so that he leaned back in an uncomfortable posture, with one human elbow resting on his horse rump. The result was not altogether happy, as even Mr. Dewitt, with head on one side critically, was forced to admit. Still, it was only for a week or so at the utmost, as by that time, he figured, he would have made enough money to buy an adequate housing for his exhibit.

“Only Half-Horse Half-Man On Earth” was the

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caption which Mr. Dewitt finally made up for his show, and these words he lettered across the top of his panel. “Don’t Miss This, Folks,” he added at the

bottom, by way of balance. The price he did not mention, as sometimes, with the ebb and flow of crowds and popularity, it is necessary in the show world to vary this detail. The thing was now complete, if not elegant, and Mr. Dewitt, with an added touch here and there, felt that he would, as he expressed it, let her ride.

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On Sunday, Daniel went up on the hill, for a walk, as he told himself, although he knew well enough, deep down within him, why he was going in that direction. He was hungry to see “the Lady,” as he was by this time calling her in the inmost sanctuary of his spirit, and he hastened up through the rough underbrush of the slope, eager for the talk which he anticipated. She had not been present at church this morning, and although the music had been better than usual, it had fallen on deaf ears as far as Daniel was concerned, whose attention was riveted on his own cogitations and the visions which were within him. On the long way home from the service he suddenly had sensed the emptiness of the week since he had seen her, filled with incident though it had been. Mr. Carr he liked to talk with, or, rather, to listen to, and his school work gave him a sense of real achievement, although, with his carpentering,

it allowed him but little time of his own. The family, concerned chiefly with the approaching departure of

the colt, had, strangely enough, made but little ado over his resumption of the school work. And this morning, aside from a more or less formal insistence that he was going with them to the divine ministrations of Mr. Holcomb, his father had paid but little attention to him. The young centaur he had not seen since the ugly encounter on Monday evening. That creature had been pretty much left alone all the week by the entire family, in the less readily accessible purlieus of the bottom pasture.

Now Daniel was climbing the hill with something of the ebullient sense of release that a diver must feel, coming up from the lower depths and mounting lustily up through the water, keenly eager for the upper air. All that sense of embarrassment of last Sunday afternoon, when he had fairly fled from her presence, was forgotten, and the boy wanted only to see her, to talk with her, to enter into that atmosphere of easy calm which she generally spread about him.

She was not painting on the top of the hill, he found, and he sat on a rock under a tree and waited, facing towards the house and hoping every minute to see her figure coming down through the sheds and barns which clustered on this side of the dwelling. Her hands would be filled with painting-tackle, and he would run forward and help to open the big gate out to the hillside, and would transfer most of her

burdens to himself, despite objections, laughing the while, both of them, in the low contented laughter which Daniel had never yet known or shared anywhere

else. His eyes wandered but little from that issue between the sheds and the barns.

After a while, when it seemed to him certain that she would not come out this afternoon, a desperate sense of loneliness and desertion swept over the boy, and he could have thrown himself flat and wept. He wanted, oh, how he wanted, to talk with her, to hear her low rich voice, to feel her kindly interest in him and his affairs, to have her look at him with her searching dark eyes which made him feel that somehow she admired him. He thought, almost with shame, of how he had run away from her last Sunday, when patently she would gladly have talked with him longer. It seemed to him now like a sacrilegious waste of golden opportunity, not to have stayed. He groaned inside himself, and made resolutions never again so to throw away chances for life-giving talks with this person so marvelous.

At length he rose and made his way towards the house. Not that he thus expressed it to himself, or even that an on-looker might thus have recognized his actions. For he started off down the hill on the far side, skirting to the north of the house, and seemingly bound for the lowlands stretching away flat and unbroken. He looked back several times to the gate, and even halted, still in the hope of seeing the familiar shape coming out to him. Then

he plunged further down, although veering to the east when he reached the lower corner of the Delacourt fence.

The underbrush was heavy along here, and Daniel pushed through with difficulty, coming on birds' nests, and breaking through spiders' webs spread from bush to bush. Once he scared up a bevy of quail, that flew away piping to one another into the neighboring woods. Sometimes he stopped and looked up the slope towards the house looming on the top of the hill. It seemed all silent and untenanted.

At the lower corner of the fence on this side, there was an old abandoned approach to the house, which had deteriorated into a foot-path, and a choked footpath at that. Daniel stopped here and considered and finally fell to removing the burs and cockles that had attached themselves to his clothes in his progress through the underbrush. This accomplished, he started walking up the old path, trying to appear casual, with eyes straying out now on this side, now on that, anything but looking intently at the house, which he would like to have been doing.

"Oh you darling!" came a low voice behind one of the window curtains, inaudible to his unsuspecting ears, and then Mrs. Delacourt went silently and laid away a pair of field glasses in the drawer of the table in the centre of the room. They gave a brief tattoo as she laid them down in her nervousness. For half an hour she had been watching the circuitous approach

of the boy, from various windows. She had first picked him up from a back window on the third floor as he sat waiting for her on the rock under the tree, and there she had watched him, with the same intensity with

which he had kept his eyes glued on the gate. Several times she had quavered in her watching, but now she laid away her glass with a quick sense of excitement, and went rapidly across the room. What should she do? There was a little cry of almost querulous doubt in her throat at the moment.

Daniel did not come up on the front porch. He strolled slowly past the house, hardly conscious of its presence, one would have said, and around to the south side. He had now completed the full circle of the compass about the structure that afternoon, and at a side-door, opening directly from the lawn, he rapped. The knocking seemed to him to echo loudly through the place, and suddenly his cheeks were red with his daring, and he was panic-stricken to think that perhaps he was intruding.

Slowly she came to the door and with a slow silent smile she opened it to him, with never a word, and with a warm grasp of the hand she welcomed him. She led him across the dining-room into the little sitting-room to the right.

“I’m ever so glad to see you, Daniel,” she said at length, seating him in a chair opposite to her own. “Let me have your hat.”

“I was afraid you were sick or something,” said

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the boy, “and that was the reason why you didn’t come out to paint as usual.” He sat on the front edge of his chair.

“Did you miss me?” she asked, smiling gently. “It was very good of you to come. As a matter of fact, I

haven't been feeling well this afternoon. I've been lying down." Then, as she continued to look at him, suddenly her eyes fell before his glance, and her cheeks were hot, and she was ashamed of herself. No, this would never do, she felt. This was the sort of thing... well, this was the sort of thing that women did, that she herself had, upon occasion, done, innocently enough, perhaps. But suddenly, now, no, she would not do it... she could not do it.

"I'm sorry," said the boy. "Maybe I'd better go."

She raised her eyes again to his, and quickly shook her head and smiled. One arm went up to grasp the chair above her head, and then she was ready to speak.

"Oh no, Daniel. You're making me feel better already, just to talk with you. Don't go. What have you been doing this week?"

"Nothing much," replied Daniel. "I started to school on Tuesday."

"I'm so glad to hear it, I can't tell you."

"And I'm going to work afternoons and all day Saturday," he continued.

"And live at home," she added, nodding her head, with her eyes steady on the boy. There was a pathos

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about her smile at the moment that Daniel could not know. And yet there was a strange mingled sense of contentment about it too.

He nodded his head in reply.

Suddenly, in the moment of silence that followed, Mrs. Delacourt rose from her chair.

“Daniel,” she said, and somehow, in the tone of her voice and the sparkle of her eye, it was patent that she knew that she was a woman of thirty-five, and he was a boy of sixteen, and they were worlds apart. “I’m going to give you a piece of apple pie that will melt in your mouth.”

“Oh no, ma’am,” he remonstrated. “Don’t trouble.”

“Just you wait,” she said, lightly touching his cheek in passing. And she was off to the kitchen to fetch it.

When, a little later, the boy sat heartily stowing away the generous segment she had brought him, there was an air of contentment upon her features, although there was, too, a mounting sense of seriousness and almost of sadness. He told her, humorously, about Mr. Carr’s theories of the new age, and about Mr. Brough, the superintendent, and his teachers, and the school work. He told her, too, about Mr. Dewitt and the plans for the Fair. But now she seemed hardly to be listening to what he was saying.

When he had set aside the plate, twilight was beginning to come into the room, and she fell to telling

him, somehow, about her marriage with Mr. Delacourt, and how she gained no sympathy from him, good man though he was. Hers had been a starved life, she confessed to him, with no one to love in the way she had always felt deep down within her that she could love. To all of which the boy seemed listless, uneasy under the recital. And the more she told him, the deeper grew his discomfiture; and the more silent he hung, the further she plunged into the recounting of

her secret life. It was almost as though she were trying to wreak some word of recognition from the boy sitting before her. At last she fell upon the tragedy of her early married life, when her one child had died in infancy.

“How old are you, Daniel?” she asked suddenly, in the growing gloom. She could hardly see his face.

“Sixteen,” replied the boy, and his cheeks were suddenly flushed with red. “But I’ll be seventeen in December.”

“Just his age,” she said, drawing up one foot beneath her, and leaning forward. “I wonder if it could be possible,” she wondered aloud, “that his soul could have entered into your body when you were born? I felt from the very first, you know, that somehow you and I were closely connected. Do you ever feel such things, Daniel? Do you ever feel a sudden quick realization that here is a person or a circumstance filled with intense meaning for you, that is going to bear an important part in your

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life? Do you ever feel the sort of little click right in here that I felt the first time I saw you?”

“No ma’am,” came the almost frightened voice of the boy, from the shadow.

“You will,” she said with quiet intensity, as though peering into his future. A spell seemed to have descended upon her.

“I guess I’ll have to be getting along home now, Mrs. Delacourt,” said the boy getting up from his chair.

“Don’t go,” she cried impetuously, putting out one hand to stay him. “Still, I suppose you’d better. Someday you must stay and have supper with me. Will you?”

“Yes ma’am,” replied the boy, but with no meaning in his voice.

She, too, had risen now, and as the boy moved to take his cap from the table, suddenly they were very close together. It seemed to her that she could feel the warmth from his young body.

“Oh Daniel!” she exclaimed, and she put both hands on his shoulders, holding him opposite to her, while she trembled as she looked into his face. The boy fumbled with both hands on his cap before him.

Then her arm curled quickly about his neck, and she drew him close for an instant.

“You’re... you’re my son, aren’t you, and you’re going to love me forever and ever, and never leave me!”

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“Yes ma’am,” he said, nervously, and she released him. Then he left her and plunged, in the growing crispness, once more down the slope.

She stood still, in the same position, after his steps were no more audible in the darkness.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” she said softly to herself at last. Very gently she took up the plate and the fork and carried them out to the kitchen. There was something of tenderness about the gesture.

Later she went back to her Proust novel. It was the only thing, she felt, under the circumstances, that

would satisfy her.

• • • • •

The boy lay long awake that night, thinking. Ben was breathing heavily in his sleep in the same bed with him, and across the room he could hear the other boys. Ray was breathing through his mouth as usual. Through the open door he could hear the firm rumbling rhythm of his father's snoring, broken now and then by a wakeful little cough from his mother. Once the baby cried, but her mother turned her over, and then she slept again.

Daniel thought once or twice that he heard the low distant sound of the centaur's voice, as he crooned his melodic even stream of song. He recognized now the swing and sweep of it, so like the throbbing verses in an alien tongue, which the creature had chanted for him a week ago. Then there was silence, and the boy supposed that the animal was sleeping.

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Suddenly, however, he sat up wide awake, listening intently. He got quickly out of bed, and began to draw on some clothes. For from the pasture he had heard the sound of rapidly galloping hoofs, which he recognized as the feet of the centaur, and the shrill voice of the animal had been screaming as he ran up the pasture towards the gate. "Daniel! Daniel!" he yelled at the top of his lungs as he pounded up the slope. There was one more scream, high and awful, and then there was silence.

The boy's fingers were nervous with buttons and with the lacings of his shoes. He noticed that his father's breathing was no longer discernible, and as he passed silently through the room, his father's voice was heard from the bed.

"Who's that?" demanded the man thickly.

"It's me," replied Daniel. "I'm going out to see what the trouble is."

Whimperings were suddenly audible immediately outside the window of the room, and the young centaur could be heard trampling the weeds next to the house, and groping about the screen.

"Damn that colt, I believe he's broke loose!" muttered Mr. Durnan.

Silence fell outside the window.

"I'll put him up," replied Daniel in the darkness, and unlocked the front door.

Almost immediately the form of the young centaur loomed against the western sky, and the animal came close and laid trembling hands about the boy's

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shoulders. He had not seen the creature since their quarrel.

"Come on down here," muttered the boy, leading the way from the house, so that they could talk without being disturbed. The young thing was still sobbing and quivering, as though frightened of something about to spring out on him.

"No, not there!" he cried, as Daniel tried to walk down towards the lower gate. "That's where it is! It'll get me, it'll get me!"

There was wild terror in the voice of the creature, like a child with a nightmare.

“All right,” said Daniel soothingly, as he patted the side of the creature. “We’ll go over here to the barn. There you’ll be all right.”

When they had entered into the still deeper blackness of the structure, which yawned cavernously against the dark night, Daniel spoke again.

“Now you wait here while I go down and close the gates, so the cows can’t get onto the track.”

“No, don’t go,” whimpered the centaur, clinging to him frantically.

“Pshaw, you’re all right now,” said the boy, again patting him. “I’ll be back in just a second.”

He wondered, as he went down towards the gate, what it was that had so frightened the creature in the night. Had his vision of the man with the tail and the goat’s horns come to him again, and this time been not so gentle? This was the first occasion, also, of the centaur’s manipulating the gates, and

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Daniel foresaw trouble if he were to continue the practice. Both barriers stood wide, leaning as though hastily pushed aside by the young creature in his passing, and then forgotten. The boy closed both of them and dropped into place the old iron hoops which secured them, and then turned back towards the barn. The centaur came trotting anxiously to meet him, but seemed more quiet than before.

“What was it ? ” asked Daniel. “ Tell me all about it.”

“Oh, it came, just the way it used to come,” the centaur answered breathlessly, as he shuddered and stood close to the boy, trembling. “It was right beside me before I saw it, and then I ran, and it ran, and it almost got me. It seemed I just couldn’t run fast enough.”

“But what is it?” demanded the boy again. “Your man with the horns? Did you see him again?”

“Oh no! It was... it was...” The centaur broke off fearfully, too tremulous to speak. He seemed nervous, apprehensively glancing towards the open all the time, as Daniel could make out in the gloom.

“It was...” The creature bent down to whisper the dread word, while he clung to Daniel in terror. “It was... the Unicorn!” His teeth were chattering immediately afterwards. “Don’t leave me, don’t leave me!” he gasped as he clung to the boy’s shoulders.

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“Nonsense,” said the latter stolidly. “Tell me about it, what’s it like? You’ve just been dreaming, and you’re scared by your own dreams. I’ve been that way lots of times. You’ll be all right in a minute.”

“It’s not very big,” began the centaur slowly, “but it’s terrible. It’s like a horse, only not so big. It’s not as high as I am. And it’s got little white hoofs, and a beard like a goat... and it’s... it’s got a horn!” Here the animal seemed to break down completely. It sobbed spasmodically, as though some sort of racking pump were painfully at work in its chest.

Daniel gulped.

“Just one horn?” he asked.

"It's long and straight, and right here," replied the centaur, and then in the dark he fumbled and finally touched Daniel's forehead. The boy drew back sharply from the touch of the creature's fingers.

"And it's got eyes like fire, that look at you something terrible!" said the centaur, shuddering. "And it came up quiet right beside me before I heard it, and there it was, looking at me out of its eyes sort of sideways, just glaring at me." He was quivering so badly that he could hardly talk, with teeth almost clenched in very terror of his vision.

They were both of them startled to hear the crunching sound of heavy steps outside.

"What you a-doin' in there?" demanded Mr.

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Durnan's voice. "You put that there colt down in the pasture and come on back to bed."

The animal fell to whimpering when he heard the words, and his every limb was trembling.

"I ain't goin' back down there in that pasture!" he asserted as he cried. "Don't you let him put me back down there in that pasture! I ain't a-goin' down back there in that there pasture!" His tone rose higher and higher as he screamed.

"Git holt of him, Dan," said the father, "and lead him down there. I ain't a-goin' to have no goin's-on with that there colt, I can tell you that, an' leastwise not in the middle of the night." He reached inside the door as he spoke, and Daniel heard him groping for the whip that hung there.

“I ain’t a-goin’!” reiterated the colt, and he backed away from the two men into the depths of the stall.

“Look out, Dan,” cried the older man. “Stand out of the way there. I got to learn that colt a lesson.” And as he spoke, the whip whistled and fell. It came down on empty air, but the second lash of it brought forth a scream from the darkness, and Daniel drew in his breath sharply.

“Don’t!” he yelled to his father, “don’t!”

“Stop, damn you!” came the terrific howl from the young centaur in the darkness, as once more the whip lashed out and could be heard falling on flesh.

“Look out!” yelled Mr. Durnan to his son. There

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was something corybantic in his cry, something that told of the enjoyment of his deed. Daniel before this had seen his father beat a refractory horse, and he could imagine the red face of the man and the veins that stood out on his forehead. Again the whip came down into the far corner, where evidently the animal stood trembling.

“You stop that, you!” cried the boy to his father, and dashing forward, he grappled for the older man in the darkness, striving to catch hold of him. At the first touch of the boy’s hand on his arm, Mr. Durnan whirled and brought down the whip viciously in this new direction. There came a hiss of in-drawn breath, and then a gurgled scream from Daniel, who staggered back.

A dash of pounding hoofs, a lunging form in the dark, and the centaur had made a break for the open.

There was silence inside the barn, except for the panting breath of the boy, who also was reaching his way towards the door.

“What’s the matter, did I git you?” asked Mr. Durnan, puffing somewhat with his recent exertions, but evidently not ill-pleased with it.

Outside, in the dim light of the stars, Daniel could be seen gingerly feeling his face, and leaning over to let the blood drip. He gave no reply to his father.

“What the hell was you tryin’ to do anyway?” demanded the man irritably.

The boy raised his head and turned part way towards the man.

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“You ain’t even human!” he said with the utmost scorn in his voice. Then he turned back to his bleeding nose. The handle of the whip had caught it a sharp blow, while the lash had fallen painlessly behind the boy’s back.

“Go down an’ shut that gate,” commanded the boy’s father. “I’ll let the colt stay in here tonight.” He yawned vastly, poked his hands in the two slanting side pockets of his overalls, and went back towards the house.

A step on the porch, and another figure was seen coming in their direction, a man walking cautiously, like one not familiar with the place, and hence feeling his way slowly through the dark.

“What’s goin’ on out here?” asked the voice of Mr. Dewitt, while in the pale light of the Milky Way he

could be seen to shift rapidly the balance of his spinal column.

“Aw, nothin’,” replied Mr. Durnan. “That durned colt has been actin’ up. That’s all.”

“‘Tain’t so,” came a voice from the silence behind them with startling vehemence. “He’s been a-lammin’ me with a long whip, that’s what he’s been a-doin’.”

Mr. Dewitt whirled about to Mr. Durnan.

“Have you?” he asked quickly. “Have you been a layin’ a whip to that animal? You hadn’t ought to a did it, I can tell you that.” He seemed wrought up about it, with waxing jerks and gestures of his body. “You oughtn’t to a did it. If there’s welts

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of that thing’s body, I can’t show it in the Fair this week, an’ it’ll take weeks for ’em to go ’way.”

Mr. Durnan’s sole reply was short, and hardly to the point.

“Well, that’s all right,” went on Mr. Dewitt. “I paid my good money for that animal, an’ you oughtn’t to a did it, Mr. Durnan. No sir.”

Mr. Durnan would have liked to tell the gentleman that it was his colt, and he meant to do with it as he dam pleased, but the mention of the money brought him to his senses and restrained his wrath. He merely spat instead. No further converse seemed needed. Mr. Durnan yawned wide, and entered definitely in to resume his rest.

There came the spurt of a lighted match, and Mr. Dewitt could be seen lighting a cigarette, still standing in the yard. Then he held the match away from him

and tried to make out the form of the centaur in the dim circle of light beyond. When the match went out, he walked on a few feet and struck a second. It is extremely difficult under these circumstances to see anything at all more than a few feet away. The little flame tends more to blind than to illumine. It seemed to Mr. Dewitt more intent on thrusting its rays into his eyes than in doing its honest work of dispelling the dark.

Daniel's blood was no longer flowing now, and he approached the man. With eyes accustomed to the night, he made out the form of the young centaur down the slope to the west, beyond the barn.

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"What you want, the colt?" he asked Mr. Dewitt in a low voice, when he came near. "He's down there below the barn. You can't get near him tonight, he's too scared."

"He oughtn't to a did it, that's all I got to say," replied Mr. Dewitt laconically. Daniel turned in silence towards the house, and after a moment's hesitation the other man too went in to bed.

After a while the moon rose. The centaur came up quietly towards the house and stood contemplating its windows. From nearly every one of these tight closed casements there came the sound of deep sleep, pitched in many keys. The centaur listened to one after another, with arms folded, and then moved on. Finally he cupped his hands about his face and tried to peer in at one of the windows. He could see nothing, but the sounds here, least audible of all, seemed to indicate the

chamber he was seeking, the sacred shrine where all the week he had been worshiping from afar. Silently he let down his horse's body on the ground, and leaned his cheek against the side of the house beneath the window sill. There was frost in the air, but that did not trouble him. He sighed softly, and settled himself for the night, not altogether displeased with the compensations of this latest experience.

IV

NEXT day, with the dawn, Mr. Dewitt was out to inspect the animal. Only one welt was visible on the young creature's flank, and not so serious as to attract attention. Mr. Dewitt could take care of it. This was to be the great week of his new dispensation, with much to attend to; and, if possible, his unfortunate grimaces seemed only augmented by the growing excitement. All the past week he had been winning the favor of the young animal now in his charge, by currying and brushing him twice a day, a process which the centaur found almost hypnotic in its charm. Mr. Dewitt had a deft hand with horses, and the colt was given more expert treatment than had ever been accorded to any animal on the Durnan place. It was the first time he had ever been touched with articles of the equine toilet. Rather less pleasant had been that morning when, with a pail of warm water from the kitchen, Mr. Dewitt had essayed a washing of the upper portion of the centaur, beginning with his back. This section of his body, everything above his waist, as a matter of fact, was seriously in need of ablution, caked as it was with the accumulated dust and sweat of the summer. Light rains and the brushing of leaves and branches had done something, to be sure, but Mr. Dewitt had early

seen the necessity of his present attempts at cleanliness. It was only with brief periods of washing,

however, interspersed with repeated rewards of the curry comb and the brush, that he finally gained his end and saw the gleaming white body of the young centaur before him.

The thing's face shone as it had not done before, and even the young animal himself looked at his cleansed hands and arms and laughed aloud. The worst tussle of all was the attempt to put a coarse comb through his tightly curling black hair, which had never yet been subjected to such discipline. Firmness would achieve nothing, and harsh words simply sent him trotting away sullen and insolent. Candy and the cajolements of the curry comb were the weapons with which Mr. Dewitt finally won this struggle, and lo, the young centaur stood revealed before them, the charming thing he was. Straight up from his low forehead rose the black thicket of his curls, which lay flat in a regular pattern, close to his round head. His face, too, was round, with a fine russet color from the sun and the wind, that had given a fine mellow warmth to his cheeks, which were firmly smooth. His eyes were the most noticeable features in his face, with their sharp black brilliancy set in the contrast of their clear whites. His mouth seemed less widely split than in previous months, although it was still a big generous opening, with strong white teeth, larger than normal. Already he had his full complement despite the fact that he

was less than seven months old. One would have said a boy about fourteen years of age, but precocious, and

very well developed in his biceps, with excellent physique. Even if the lower portion of his body had been hidden, he would have given an impression of something alien and inhuman. And of course, when he turned round, the soft dark mane of young hair running down his spine from the nape of his neck to his animal shoulders, would have been startling.

After an early breakfast, Mr. Dewitt wrapped two old blankets about his charge, and started down the road towards the Fair grounds. Not for warmth, naturally, were these coverings put on the animal, but for concealment; no longer was the young centaur to be exposed free gratis to the eye of the vulgar. Henceforth Mr. Dewitt intended that they should pay for the privilege.

The Fair grounds were already the scene of feverish activity. From their lethargy of a whole year they suddenly were wakening into life, their one ephemeral fling, the sole week, of all the fifty-two weeks of the year, when the place was unutterably dirty and ugly and sordid and, in the worst sense of the word, human. At other times this open stretch of flat grassy land lying at the base of wooded hills was not altogether ignoble. Meditative cows worked their slow progress across its green paddock. The white-washed grand stand and band stand and three or four exhibition halls lost something of their

stark bleakness under the ministrations of the winter snows and the spring rains, and grew less blatant in the landscape. For years a colony of kildeer had had their

nesting places in the wide security of the central open space, and at evening they circled crying about, plaintive as lost souls.

All that was gone now. Workmen had come and patched up once more the tumble-down fence of boards that surrounded the place. A totally new barrier, cleverly fabricated of high steel uprights and barbed wire, had been stretched along the south front of the grounds, and, as the president of the Fair board said, made a very fine appearance. Whitewash gleamed and dazzled. Light booths of lath and canvas were springing up to form irregular lanes among the buildings. Country people were arriving with chickens in crates, for exhibition, or else were striving to lead in recalcitrant heifers, or drive in panicky sheep. Heavy clouds of dust were already swirling up along the treeless stretch from the main portal to the principal portion of the grounds. Here and there a lady, too highly dressed, and still more highly painted, threaded her way towards town, and by her very presence proclaimed herself a part of one of the “tent shows.”

“Some dame!” would laugh one of the workmen through a mouthful of nails, winking, and the man across the way would nod and grin silently, for his wife was with him, although her back was turned. Ah, great times were ahead of them for that week!

The “tent shows” themselves, five in number, were arranged at the far end of the cluster of buildings and booths, forming a semi-circular apse to the grand vista down the grounds. A partially completed Ferris wheel

rose in the central axis of their sweep, and beyond that lay a dilapidated version of the Whip, with a scrappy gasoline engine in its centre.

The tent shows formed the indubitable aristocracy of the concessions on the grounds, and, as a matter of fact, for more than half the people attending the Fair, they made up the sole worth of the whole celebration. A Negro minstrel show, and an exhibition of Oriental and Classical dancing; an Athletic Congress, the Largest Snake on Earth, and a Krazy House, constituted the full complement of entertainments here. Various fortune tellers, freaks, and balloon booths clung about the skirts of these more pretentious palaces of amusement, and there were stands galore where games of chance were played, with balls to throw and rings to toss and guns to shoot. Even thus early in the morning, the aromas of popcorn and hot roasted peanuts and sizzling hotdog and hamburger sandwiches were in the air, with an occasional whiff of strong coffee coming down the wind.

Mr. Dewitt entered into the grounds by the wide vehicular gate near the Holy Roller church, nodding to the guard there and showing his receipted tag as a concessionaire. The centaur, wrapped in his two

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blankets, looked not unlike a llama or a guanaco, but the guard did not recognize him as such, knowing the animal from its earliest days, on neighbor Durnan's place.

Down through the buggies and Fords towards the main part of the grounds Mr. Dewitt passed. He had

put a belt on the centaur, and on this, under the blankets, he kept a tight grip. The young animal was a bit timorous over all the commotion, and tended to hold back.

“Come on, Dick, it’s all right now. Come on, boy, nothin’s goin’ to hurt you,” Mr. Dewitt kept urging the creature. His features, left to their own account in his complete concern with his charge, frolicked and sported themselves at a great rate in his face, playing almost constant new pranks.

“I’ll give you some candy. Come on, now, boy,” he cajoled the animal, as they came into the last stretch of their journey.

“How are you!” called out one booth owner to Mr. Dewitt. “What you got, dog and pony show?”

“What the hell!” ejaculated his next door neighbor in the avenue of booths, turning to look after Mr. Dewitt and his strange convoy.

“Where did he get holt of that thing?” asked the first man’s wife, drawing her red sweater a little higher about her neck.

Mr. Dewitt had installed his retreat on the fringe of the five great tent shows, between the canvas walls of the Negro minstrel show and the covered

pavilion where was displayed the Smallest Lady on Earth. Thus, on one side at least, he brushed elbows with the very finest blood of the Fair grounds show world. His own long acquaintance with the ins and outs of this whole business had guided him safely and

adroitly through to this consummation, in the face of much competition during the week.

His length of canvas was strung from the Smallest Lady's booth in the rear to a tent pole of the minstrel show, and in front this operation was repeated, except for an aperture to admit those who had paid a fee. This thing of utilizing the supports of other shows for the maintenance of one's own walls was, of course, out of the ordinary, and only Mr. Dewitt's long association with tent people and his aforesaid knowledge of the workings of their minds would have brought about such an arrangement.

The day was clear, and, having safely ensconced his protégé in the canvas enclosure, Mr. Dewitt sat down and mopped his brow. The centaur, too, was glad to cast off the encumbering blankets, which he left where they fell, and then set about the investigation of his surroundings. He could just peer over the top of the canvas wall of his unroofed prison, and on every side he found things of interest. The protecting screen lent him something of his old confidence immediately, and his legs ceased to tremble, and his eyes were no longer starting with terror. As promised, Mr. Dewitt sallied forth and bought a bag of popcorn for the creature, in lieu of the candy,

which he found was unprocurable. It was the first of this delicacy that the animal had ever seen, but he soon was inured to its use, and fell to putting the light morsels into his mouth automatically while he stared out over the scene without.

Two of his vistas were cut blank short, although he could, by moving about, gain a vision of the interior of the minstrel show tent. As to the front and the back views from his lair, he was sadly torn in his interest, since the front wall looked out on the busy scene of the preparation for money making, essentially and exclusively human, and the rear vision gave him a sight of a good stretch of the race-track, where, in the early morning air, drivers in light sulkies were already exercising their horses. The centaur was drawn from the one to the other ceaselessly. The front show would hold him, until there came the quick patter of approaching hoofs down the smooth stretch of the track behind him. Then he would whirl, and step hurriedly across to watch the horses dash by, and all the while, he was cramming popcorn into his mouth, so that once or twice he choked.

By noon the hubbub had heightened to a pitch of excitement that strangely affected the centaur, and he wanted to laugh, and yet he wanted somehow to cry. Mr. Dewitt had not as yet put up his sign or opened the doors of his display, and so the animal had been alone most of the morning. One or two friends of the proprietor had been over to inspect

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the creature. Almost universally they had grave doubts on the idea of his complete nudity. A horse was one thing. A human being stripped to the waist was also within the bounds of possibility, as witness the husky figure of Red the Wrestler, over in the Athletic Congress, whose hairy breasts and cleft navel were

exposed to the vision of all comers, and never a word was said. But the combination of the two struck doubts into more heads than one, among Mr. Dewitt's associates.

"I'd put a coat or somep'n on him, Barney," advised the gentleman who had inherited the disingenuous kewpies. "Or a shirt."

"Now that'd look like hell!" replied Mr. Dewitt, blinking his eyes and shaking his head. "Goin' round with his shirt tail hangin' out in front and behind, wouldn't it! You can't tuck 'em in nowhere."

"Cut 'em off!" suggested the proprietor from the Smallest Lady next door, who, by dint of favors extended, had wandered in unasked.

"I got a old coat I could put on him," said Mr. Dewitt. "But hell, you got to show 'em where he's joined together, or they'll think there's somep'n phoney about it. And shucks, the show wouldn't have no style to it, nowadays, then."

The object of all this discussion stood looking at them silently, sometimes casting an eye out over the top of the canvas, at the people in front, or at the trotting horses behind.

"Well, I'm goin' to try it without first," decided

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Mr. Dewitt, at last. "And if they don't like it, I can turn it into a 'For Men Only' or else I can put a coat on him. I should worry."

As the sun crossed the meridian, things began in earnest and the great double game begun, of getting as much as possible for as little as possible money spent,

and of giving up as little as possible for the maximum amount of money received. The morning had been given over largely to men and women bringing displays for the Fair, but there now surged into the grounds great numbers of children, and high school students, and whole families from back in the hills, and Negro girls in their 'teens, with hair greasy with straightening ointments. Round and round the booths and the semicircle of the shows they began to mill, with a steady motion that was not to cease until nearly midnight. And tomorrow would be the same, God willing, and the weather permitting; and the next day, and the next, and so on till Saturday night. The laden atmosphere of dust and mingled odors from cooking and many heated people gathered together had already taken possession of the place, and would not give up its sway until the dew fell over the hushed and darkened place, under the stars in the early hours of the morning tomorrow. Shouts and cries of vendors and touts; the horrid din of the Whip, as the cars were whirled round over the cast-iron floor of the contraption; the tootling music of the merry-go-round which every now and then would get stuck on some one note until its owner

would go and poke a finger in a particular spot of its anatomy; the chug-chugging of the engine that drove the Ferris wheel in its mad revolutions; fragments of the five-piece band music, peripatetic in all the tent shows, one after another; songs and snappy bits of repartee filched through the torn canvas walls of the

minstrel show... all these started into being now, and reared above the Fair ground their petty dome of sound, paltry in its details, and pathetic as an attempt at human enjoyment. Rubber balls on long elastics were a favorite form of amusement, and were sold to young people by the score. They served admirably to strike up chance acquaintanceships. Flicked at a thin-clad calf of a leg, or aimed higher still, what was easier than for a quick whirling glance of reproof, with a smart word of indignation, all accompanied with a smile of encouragement... and the trick was done. Bright colored hat bands were also much in demand, bearing in large letters such invitations to conviviality as "I'm looking for a sweetie," or "Go as far as you like," or "Kiss me kid." Worn as a joke, across the front of a hat, or, failing that, as most of the girls were hatless, draped slanting across the bosom, these mottoes sallied forth giggling in couples or trios, in the hope that they would be taken with at least some modicum of seriousness. Oh, what things to talk of in weeks to come, the Fair did offer!

Mr. Dewitt unfurled his banner to the view of this motley assembly about twelve-thirty. A hamburger

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sandwich and a bottle of red pop had constituted his luncheon, and would be his last refection until along in the evening some time, when he would again be hungry, in the brief period of relaxation between the afternoon and the evening crowds, and when he would again indulge in this satisfying combination of food and drink.

He had tied a rope across the interior of his enclosure, so that the centaur was railed off from the entrance to the booth, separate from where the people would stand who had paid their money to gaze on him. Nodding, winking, instable as quicksilver in body and features, Mr. Dewitt placed himself before the canvas and began his endless patter of inducement.

“Only a quarter, ladies and gentlemen. Don’t miss the greatest show on the grounds. Absolutely unique in the annals of scientific investigation. Interesting, entertaining, and instructive. Will not offend the most fastidious lady in Roosevelt. For men, women, and children. One quarter, twenty-five cents. Straight from the great expositions of the East. The only one of its kind on earth today. See the half-man half-horse. It’s alive. Your money back if you are not satisfied as to its authenticity. Speaks seven languages. Step right in and see for yourself, ladies and gentlemen. One quarter, twenty-five cents to all.” And so on, by the hour, Mr. Dewitt poured out the steady stream of his eloquence, slow and deliberate, uttered with a deep bass voice utterly

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unlike the accents which his habitual associates heard in his daily converse. Gone were the slurred vocables, the dirty vowels and the clipped consonants. Vanished completely were the slips of grammar and the paucity of vocabulary, ordinary with the man. This was business now, and his business Mr. Dewitt surely did know, having learned it in long years of training. And, more remarkable yet, perhaps, vanished too were those

twistings and twitchings which seemed most characteristic of the man. As firmly controlled as you or I he stood there flipping in his hand a batch of tickets, his whole body under beautiful discipline, his whole energy concentrated on that mobile energetic mouth, which ceaselessly, hour upon hour, poured forth the shaped and competent syllables of his speech. As beautifully regular as the even notes of a trodden mechanical piano came forth his words, and as impersonal they seemed. He did not address this person or that directly, but like a force of nature he held them, lured them, hardly conscious of their presence until they stepped up and demanded entrance. Then, for a brief second, the even current of his voice was halted, only to take up its flow once more a moment later.

It is lamentable to record, however, that on the present occasion the eloquence of Mr. Dewitt did not win that measure of success which his friends and he might have wished. Segments of the ever-revolving multitudes, in the central whirlpool halted from time to time to listen to his voice; and then

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moved on. There were moments when a fair sized congregation waited to hear his sermon, with the great stream of people eddying past on the outskirts; but they dissolved before taking that final plunge, which to Mr. Dewitt constituted the sole measure of success, wherein they relinquished into his palm their quarters and then entered to gaze upon his proffered show. All vendors, salespeople, agents, realtors, etc., know that

the most difficult moment is that in which the victim is asked to make the definite move of finality. That motion towards the trousers pocket, the purse, or the fountain pen is hedged round with all sorts of inhibitions, difficult to decipher, and yet more difficult to break down. Mr. Dewitt tried the ruse of example, and on numerous occasions during the afternoon, sundry gentlemen in faded garments came up to him, ostentatiously paid their quarters (slipped to them not half an hour before) and entered in to see the centaur. You or I would have recognized these seekers after the unusual as being fellow boarders with Mr. Dewitt at the Durnan table, and sharers with him in the Durnan beds. But the well acted little drama fell flat. Even when they came out and afterwards volunteered the information to divers bystanders that the show was well worth the money, their assurances fell on deaf ears, and still the inhibitions held firm.

In the course of the afternoon, just five quarters had found their way into the pocket of Mr. Dewitt; and three of those had come from a source hardly

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bespeaking the keen intellectual curiosity of the community. For on one occasion, three children, two little boys and a little girl, aged respectively eight, ten, and nine, had stationed themselves on the front row of Mr. Dewitt's auditory, and there, craning up at him steadily had remained fixed, while the multitudes behind them came, listened, moved on, and were replaced by yet others, who in their turn came, listened, and moved on, and so on, for an hour. Evenly

over their heads rolled the shaped periods of Mr. Dewitt's exhortation. Sometimes they turned and whispered one to another, or let their attention wander to some nearby spectacle, but generally they stood rooted, with unwavering attention, and in their faces something of the pride of proprietorship. These were Durnans, Bill and Carry and Guy, and a sense of importance was upon them, because of their connection with this man and, yet more, with his display.

"Howdy, Mr. Dewitt," finally said Bill, when the mob had all run off to look at the dancing girls on the platform in front of their tent.

"Howdy, Mr. Dewitt," echoed Guy, grinning.

"Howdy, Mr. Dewitt," said Carry, sticking, with exemplary lack of imagination, to the social formula of these regions.

"Cost you but twenty-five cents, one little quarter of a dollar," went on the even-keeled vessel of Mr. Dewitt's speech. "The only show of its kind on earth, remember, ladies and gentlemen, guaranteed

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to entertain, amuse, and instruct, with nothing to offend the most fastidious lady in Roosevelt, now open to the public."

As he spoke, he nodded his head gravely to the three youngsters ranged in front of him, although never varying for a second the continued rhythm of his words. That same impersonality shown forth in his manner of speech was evident also in the finely balanced deflection of his head in their direction. Right

on with his service of humanity he would go, spreading before them the inestimable privilege of gazing on the one and only half-man half-horse on earth, let come such personal friends as would! He would continue with his duty.

And so he nodded gravely, and accorded them no personal greeting. Indeed it is to be doubted whether Mr. Dewitt recognized his young interlocutors, having never yet exchanged a word of converse with them in their father's house, not being given to such matters. They were nothing daunted by his seeming lack of cordiality. In fact they were rather set up by his manner.

"I'll do it, 'll you?" whispered Guy to his sister.

Carry seemed negative, although not openly opposed, beyond a peevish twist of one shoulder out of her brother's handgrasp.

"Come on, Guy, le's you an' me, then, huhn?" said Bill, eagerly. "We got a quarter."

Guy gave no reply to this, as being most fitting treatment of a young scion of the family.

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"Well I'm goin' to, whether you do or not," said Guy to Carry, secretly buttressed by Bill's adherence.

"Aw, come on!" said Bill, tugging at Carry's dress as he and his elder brother went forward to pay their admittance money. And Carry came.

Thus the three children approached the canvas, to look upon the animal which but yesterday, nay, this very morning, had been theirs to view freely, uninterruptedly, from dawn to dusk, in their father's

paddock. Seventy-five cents had they lavished for the privilege.

“Hi!” said Guy, when once within the enclosure.

“Hi!” echoed Bill.

Carry was silent, lagging along behind the others, and one would have said that she was coldly indifferent to the creature before them, at which she hardly glanced, at first.

He was standing with his back to them when they entered, and was peering over the far edge of the canvas, where something seemed vitally to interest him. Thus only his buttocks, with their switching tail, and the white surface of his human back” were visible to the invaders.

“Gee!” he was heard to mutter in admiration, over the spectacle that was holding him.

Oh, fickle, fickle centaur! Last night you lay sighing beneath a lady’s boudoir window, or what you took to be such, albeit in truth it was but an opening into the Durnan kitchen. And now, today, when

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that lady comes to look upon you in your glory, behold, your back is turned, and she finds you bent upon the loveliness of another she, and one far less innocent and less lacking in guile than the Carry behind your back, whose name alone but yesterday was magic for you. Man is but an inconstant bit of flesh for the most part, Carry, and your present attitude is, among mortals, I regret to say, not unique. Only, your initiation is somewhat earlier than for most.

It was, of course, the exhibition of Oriental and Classical Dancing which held rapt the gaze of the naughty centaur. Ever and anon, to inspire desire and bring in an audience, the three dancing girls of the exhibit would be brought on to the narrow podium before their tent, and there, after a brief exhortation in the manner which we have already met in the words of Mr. Dewitt, they would give a sample of their Terpsichorean art, while two cornets tootled and a drum was beat and cymbals clashed. It was but of the simplest, their outdoor dancing, a rhythmical ducking of the knees, while one bared arm waved aloft a corner of the long cape which hid... and yet not quite hid... their legs, bare between rolled stockings and short bright-colored skirts. At the end of this display of dancing, they would utter a little shriek which symbolized, but rather tamely, wild passion, and then the Corybants would enter into the tent, and hectic efforts would be made to sell tickets. If enough people were not lured in, within

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two minutes the three damsels would once more issue forth, to duck, and wave, and shriek, and enter in seductively, once more. And still again, and yet again, if consecutive lurings were not adequate in their results, would the maidens show their wares outside.

Such a sequence of enchantments was now going on at the tent which closed the vista of the area of concessions, and thitherwards was directed the gaze of the young centaur. But not indiscriminately was he looking in that direction. Of the three dancing maids,

only one made his pulse beat faster and held his attention, the one furthest to the right, the one who must, in all honesty, be described as the fat one. The middle one might have been truthfully designated as the pretty one, whence sprang no doubt, her central position; and the third one was indubitably the youngest of the three, but plain. Who shall say what brought the eyes of our young animal to bear solely upon the... must we say it?... the old one, at the right, the fat one! Someday we shall know, perhaps, the chemistry which guides such matters, which now seem sometimes but the vagaries of chance. Be it as it may, the centaur was fascinated by the woman on the right, who waved aloft an arm which was no mean limb as far as weight goes, and he had eyes for none other. And, be it confessed, it was an arm which, once seen, one would have recognized in the middle of the Sahara desert. For upon its upper reaches, near the shoulder, was

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tattooed a rosebud, pink and delicate, first blushing into being, with an attendant spray of green leaves, all fair and virginal, spread upon the ample white field of her biceps muscle. There was a rare and exotic quality about that naive bit of art work, simply because it was so little expected on the huge bulk of her frame. Its origin, it may be said in passing, was less virginal than might be suggested by the vernal quality of its subject. Down in New Orleans one night, years ago, in a moment of rash inebriation, the present wearer of the decoration had, as the result of a bet, had the thing

perpetrated on her arm at the expense of thirty cents, the last of her then available money. For a week she had suffered with that arm, and had returned to the little shop to see if the stains could be removed. That operation proving too costly, she had suffered in silence, and ever since had been very proud of the distinction. And it was indeed unique.

The centaur stood, still gazing, even after the final little shriek of wild passion had been sounded for the sixth time, and seemingly his inamorata was to return no more. Only then did he first hear the sounds of greeting behind him, and turn wearily to see what was there disturbing his reverie.

There was a nonchalance about his gesture that even the insensitive eyes of Carry could discern, a cool and insolent lack of any possible interest in her and her affairs, which she knew spelled her doom, as far as concerned her power over the affections of the

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centaur. She felt inclined to pout at first, but then neither her brothers nor the young animal paid any attention to her at any rate, and so she forgot her feelings in the sheer interest of the interview.

The centaur's education had gone on apace in the course of the morning, and he now demonstrated to the admiring trio his prowess with a cigarette. Mr. Dewitt had initiated him this morning in this matter, to keep him quiet, and he now permitted the three youngsters to stand and admire him while he puffed and blew out the smoke, having struck the match on a lifted fore-hoof.

In matters of sentiment he had advanced just as far towards thorough masculinity. Present in the company was a young woman who had on previous occasions caused him to suffer, and who had assumed towards him airs of superior disdain. To her he now accorded no notice whatever, allowing her to languish in a cold outer limbo, rejected from the circle where stood the three males affably talking. The young Durnans had never held a very high opinion of the odd colt in their father's pasture, but now that colt was lifted onto a very pinnacle of fame, in the wonderful precincts of the Fair grounds, and they were proud and honored to be talking with him. That prestige warmed the heart of the former outcast mightily, and all the time he was talking with Bill and Guy, he was conscious of the little girl waiting silent and glum, looking on at them from near the entrance.

"What was you lookin' at, when we come in?" asked Guy.

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"When?" said the centaur, coughing slightly and looking at his cigarette.

"Why, just now, when we come in here. You was lookin' out over the top of the tent, and never would look up."

"Oh, at somep'n," replied the animal smiling slyly, not averse to talking.

"I bet you, you got another sweetie, that's what I bet you," burst out Bill, grinning.

"Aw, I bet he ain't neither," rejoined Guy, looking at the centaur for corroboration.

"I'll bet you a million dollars!" went on Bill, raising his voice.

"Come on, let's go," put in Carry from near the entrance, irritably. No one paid any attention to her.

The centaur was rather shy now, but raised his head to see whether the dancing-maidens had put in their appearance again. Outside the canvas wall could be heard the even diapason of Mr. Dewitt's voice.

"I'll tell you somep'n if you won't tell," said the centaur finally, fixing his eye on Guy, as being the oldest present.

"Naw, I won't tell, honest," replied Guy. "None of us won't. Will we, Bill? Will we, Carry? Huhn?"

Bill shook his head, but Carry raised her nose and looked sideways at a spot on the canvas.

"Naw," went on the centaur, "I ain't goin' to tell nobody but just you, Guy, just you alone. See?"

"All right, whisper in my ear. What is it?"

"Promise you won't tell?" said the centaur, taking

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his mouth from Guy's ear and looking down into his face. Guy nodded. Still the centaur hesitated. Then, with a final glance to see that the other two were far enough away, he plunged.

"I'm stuck on a girl!" he confided. Guy seemed unimpressed.

"She's a peach, " continued the centaur. Still Guy was unmoved.

"Want to know who she is?" went on the animal. Guy nodded his head, but without enthusiasm. Still, a secret is a secret, and he was willing to have it poured

into his ear. The centaur had become one of the mighty ones of the earth, and a younger brother and sister were looking on, not unenviously.

“She’s one of the dancers down there. The one over to the right. You look at her the next time they come out.” He had finished his confidences, and fairly shoved Guy away from him.

“Don’t you tell, now!” he admonished the boy. “I’ll knock your block off if you do.”

“I bet I know what it is,” swaggered Bill.

“Bet you don’t,” said the centaur.

“Come on, let’s go!” demanded Carry, insistently.

And they went, all of them less satisfied with the animal than they had been upon entering.

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By Thursday night it was evident to Mr. Dewitt

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that his gold mine was not as richly loaded as he had pictured. Seven dollars and fifty cents had thus far been the rewards of his labor and unceasing talking since Monday noon, and this was hardly affluence. By day and by night he had been assiduous in application to his task. But still the crowd had surged by and left him unsolaced. He tried to explain it by the meagre tawdriness of his equipment. The show next door, the Smallest Lady on Earth, raised about three feet from the ground on a platform, with a canvas roof and canvas walls, did a thriving business. On a diminutive pair of wooden shoulders there fluttered in the breeze a

little dress, fit for a child of three, and this seemed to hold infinite charms over the purses of the multitude. Mr. Dewitt had nothing like that, and could think of nothing that would take its place in the case of his own prodigy. He inquired adroitly, and found that the two-headed pig and the abnormally formed Jersey (For Men Only) were faring but little better than himself, although they had more formal equipment in the way of tents and signs than had he. Animals out of the ordinary seemed somehow below par in Roosevelt.

“How you comin’?” inquired a woman’s voice late on Thursday night, when, having squeezed out what was evidently the last nickel for that night, the concessions were beginning to close. Mr. Dewitt was seated silent in front of his display, and his old gesticulations again held sway upon his features.

“Rotten,” he replied, twisting one cheek awry. “I

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don’t know what in hell’s the matter. They won’t seem to fall for it at all.”

“What you got?” demanded the lady’s voice, and a jewelled hand lifted the canvas curtain at the entrance and looked in.

“Jesus!” she exclaimed, “where’d you get holt of that?”

The centaur glanced languidly up. There in the entrance stood his divinity of the dance platform, and her gaze was upon him. For the first time, his eyes were meeting hers. A thrill went over him, and a warm blush of color went to his cheeks. His lips parted in a smile, revealing his white, even, big teeth.

“He’s cute lookin’,” said the lady, admiringly, and then, her eyes lingering on him, she dropped the curtain.

Mr. Dewitt and Sade had known each other ever so long, and had reached a comfortable stage of friendship where they were each untroubled by the other. Past differences of opinion and past warmths of demonstrative affection were alike forgotten between them now. While Mr. Dewitt made his simple preparations for the night, Sade stood and talked with him, for they were rich with the gossip of the Fair grounds. Then he departed for a moment, to carry across to the booth of disingenuous kewpies the length of canvas loaned for the daytime.

There was an awkward silence between the lady and the centaur, one of whom hummed softly and looked about her as though there were no creature

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even remotely human near her, while the other looked his praise and tried to think of something to say. All the week had he been carrying on his long-distance adoration of her charms, and was he now to allow the opportunity to lapse, for a word spoken with his adored one! He ached to speak aloud and be spoken to by her.

“Will you let me ride you up to the gate?” he said, finally. “I’ll go just as careful!”

The lady started at the words, not having expected speech from the animal beside her. She turned and looked at him, and had she been less hardened to the surprises of this world, she would undoubtedly have

fled incontinently down the open stretch of booths and tents. Instead, she merely halted momentarily in the gesture of taking a fresh stick of gum into her lips, and then she laughed softly, looking into the ruddy face of the centaur.

“Well, if he ain’t the cute thing now!” she said, and her arms went akimbo, while her jaws had the accentuated motion demanded by newly broken gum. “Who taught you to talk?”

“Taught myself,” replied the centaur promptly. “Who taught you?”

Sade laughed at that, gaily, and slapped one thigh.

“Quit your kiddin’,” she said. “How old are you, cutie?”

“I ain’t goin’ to tell you,” he replied with perfect good nature. “You’d laugh at me. An’ I’m really oldern’t that, anyway. Shucks, I’m older’n you are.”

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Sade looked a bit self-conscious at this last remark, but its form pleased her. She ran one hand through her bobbed hair at the back, and straightened her coat.

“You don’t look it,” she said. “An I don’t believe it. You don’t look more ’n a kid.”

“Shucks!” replied the centaur, his eyes fixed upon her. Then, to establish his sophistication in her eyes, he spat deliberately.

Mr. Dewitt was coming back by this time.

“How old is your... how old is this... how old is he?” demanded Sade, nodding towards the centaur.

“Eight months,” asserted Mr. Dewitt, going on with packing for the night. Sade’s laugh rang out once

more.

“Pretty well developed for eight months, I’ll tell the world,” she said. “He’s been tryin’ to kid me along that he’s older than I am.”

“Fat chance!” said Mr. Dewitt. And there was something that made Sade turn appreciatively toward the animal, liltin’ him better than she did the man.

“He wants to ride me up to the gate. Can he?” said Sade to Mr. Dewitt. The centaur’s heart began to beat furiously.

The proprietor of the show turned and looked at the creature.

“I don’t know if he’s strong enough to hold you yet or not,” he said.

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“Aw, sure I can!” insisted the centaur.

“Well, you needn’t rub it in about my weight,” said Sade, gathering up her skirts, taking Mr. Dewitt’s last remark as permission.

The grounds were by this time denuded of their visitors, and so there was no reason for further concealment tonight. Most of the lights were now extinguished. Booths had been stripped of their wares, the majority of the stands were shrouded and shut until morning. The button-nosed palm-reader across the way, who wore a turban and pretended to be a Hindoo, was drinking a bottle of near-beer and eating a final hamburger before turning in to sleep.

“Sleepin’ in town?” demanded Mr. Dewitt.

“Nothin’ doin’,” replied Sade, turning towards the centaur. “In this joint I sleep in. They ain’t no street-

cars, and those jitneys swat you two bits a ride. Ain't they got a nerve! So I just bunk it in the tent, with Olive."

The centaur had never before given a ride to a lady, and so stood rather nonplussed as to what he ought to do. He had ridden the Durnan children about the pasture, but this was different.

"Hold down your hand, kiddo, and gimme a h'ist," Sade commanded the centaur. "Gentle, now, not too hefty."

Oh, bliss, oh rare exultance! Into the rough palm of his lowered hand she put the sole of her shoe. That was wonderful. Then with both hands she grasped his shoulders, and finally had him tight

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about the neck. With difficulty he tried to raise himself.

"Now," he adjured, "give a little jump like." She did as he bade her, and landed on his back, although not without a struggle. She weighed more than three of the Durnan children put together. Still it was delicious.

"Better hold on tight" he said, as he felt her relax her grip on him. Her hand gained a firm hold on his belt as she sat sideways on his back. At his first move, she squealed most charmingly, with a touch of femininity that thrilled his deepest being. "An' you got to sit front-ways or you'll slip off," he added. So Sade's shoe scraped the small of his back in passing to the other side, and then she was established.

"It's too damn late to go up to the gate and back," growled Mr. Dewitt. "He'll just take you over to the

tent.” The man was deep in his despondency over the financial failure of his undertaking, and an impenetrable gloom hung upon him. If things did not pick up tomorrow, he told himself, he was gone caflooeey, and that was no joke. These damned hickies round here didn’t know a good show when they seen one. How he would extricate himself from his present debts, and transport himself and show to Benton county for the Fair next week, he did not know, especially as the immediate deposit of a staggering fee with the Fair officials there in all probability loomed before him for Monday. There was

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still Friday, to be sure, which was generally a big day, and Friday night was generally a good time. Saturday would be pretty dull with all the packing up, but Saturday night, if the weather held fair and mild as it had been all through the week, would be what Mr. Dewitt called a rip-snorter. It usually was. Everything might yet come out O.K., he said to himself as he walked along, twitching and nervous beside the centaur and his burden.

“Gee, I wish it was longer,” said the young animal stepping along with a new grace in the way he lifted his feet. He glanced down sidewise at Mr. Dewitt and wondered if he dared make a dash for it, and carry the lady off, after all, as far as the gate and back. He was sorely tempted to do so. Only two considerations bade him be more wary. In the first place, it was patent that Sade was not much of a horsewoman. Even his present slow movement, at a mere creeping walk, caused the

lady to wobble about unsteadily, now this way, now that, like a bag of grain set upright on his back. What could he hope for if he set off at any faster gait? In the second place, it must be remembered that the young centaur was only six months old, and he had to confess to himself that he was growing increasingly conscious of her weight. His slender spine was not yet the thing of steel that it would later be. Love is a mighty anodyne, true, but tired the young centaur indubitably was, although he had borne the lady of his love but fifty feet.

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Once more Sade put her arms about his neck and slid to the ground. The creature laughed and turned to look at her when she was safely landed on the earth and had straightened her skirts.

“That was swell,” she said, patting him on his equine shoulder. “You’re a nice pony, all right; ain’t he, Barney!” The centaur would have liked it better if the caress had been less like that ordinarily bestowed on a trusty mare, and he had been called something less horsey. His smile lost something of its sheer glory, while Mr. Dewitt only grunted, and seemed preoccupied with his private affairs.

“Here,” said Sade, dipping into the patent-leather bag which she carried. From its depths she extracted a stick of chewing-gum, and offered it to the animal. “Want one, Barney?” she demanded.

Silently the two brittle morsels were accepted, and the centaur watched to see what Mr. Dewitt did with it. Then he too fell to peeling the thing of its integuments,

paper and silver and tissue, although his thick fingers were not so subtle about it as were the man's. By the time he had popped it into his mouth, Sade was gone, and the two males turned towards those low sheds where they slept. The centaur was intent upon the management of his gum, a new experience for him.

"Don't swallow it," said Mr. Dewitt, looking up at him briefly. The animal shook his head. The physical taste of it was delicious to him; but this was

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as nothing to what might be called the savour of love that it exhaled through all his being. For had it not been given to him by the most wonderful person in the universe! Gee, with her own fingers! Even after they had turned in for the night, the young creature stood for long, leaning out of the window of the shed, slowly chewing, chewing, on the imperishable substance between his teeth. And ever and anon, in the starlight, he might have been seen to remove the stuff and look at it with softened eyes. Then he put it back into his mouth. He was rich with contentment.

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Friday, although no more successful from the point of view of Mr. Dewitt than any of the previous days had been, proved to be fraught with incident for the young centaur. He had four major experiences. Disaster hung over the man, but life was daily growing more interesting to the animal in his charge.

For the centaur, in the course of the afternoon, after gazing as long as it was possible on the ineffable charms, richly displayed, of his beloved Sade, had turned, when she disappeared, to the rear wall of his canvas enclosure, and there had fallen to watching the horses on the track. To the right, hidden from view, a band was playing. And from time to time could be heard the massed frenzied cheering of excited human beings, seated on the grand-stand. It was thrilling to hear them, and every time their

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united roar went up, the young centaur was strangely excited, and he moved about nervously in his narrow paddock. All the week the thing had affected him strongly, but today, after four solid days of confinement, and after the last inspiriting encounter of last night, he seemed more ill at ease than ever, pacing up and down the canvas wall, with his hands clasped behind him. When the horses would go swinging past the fence, exercising, or in the full cluster of the race, he would stand with eager eyes and tense body, intent only on the spectacle they offered. When the sulkies and their trotting horses gave way to the running races, the strain was still worse, for the jockeys riding high on the horses' necks, hugging them intimately and moving with a rhythm completely that of the animals, roused the spirit of competition in the young centaur's breast.

"Shucks! I could beat 'em all hollow!" he said to himself as he spat in disgust after one of the races. Earlier in the week he had yelled and waved his arms

out over the top of the canvas at the conclusion of one of the races. But Mr. Dewitt had come in thereupon and put an effective stop to that, so that upon the present occasion the animal expressed his excitement more discreetly.

At four o'clock came the big running race of the afternoon, the race which might most nearly be called the great classic of the Roosevelt County Fair. One mile, twice around the oval track, the jockeys in their bright-colored caps and jackets were to take

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their steeds, for a purse that drew horses from all parts of Missouri and from neighboring sections of Oklahoma and Arkansas. The band was at its loudest and best, the ancient grand-stand was packed to capacity, all along the fence were ranged men, women, and children, blacks and whites intermingled, eagerly craning their necks for a view of the participants. At length they began to appear, nervous highly-fed horses, prancing, never quiet, fretful at their bits. Perched on their backs were thin wisps of humanity, some old, some young, but all of them slender of body, with high-pitched knees and an anxious look on their faces.

The centaur too was fretful as these dual units passed and repassed his stand, and it seemed sometimes as though he were going to cry. Sade's bit of chewing-gum was still active between his jaws, but now he had forgotten it and was manipulating the morsel in unconscious nervousness.

Three times the restive group of horses in the track backed and side-stepped and aligned themselves badly for the start of the race, and three times they made false starts and had to be brought back once more within the ken of the young centaur. All of which wrought upon his feverish nerves most sadly, and brought him to a pitch of excitement beyond anything he had ever yet suffered. His eagerness within him was almost like a pain. The pit of his stomach hurt him with his pent-up desire. He stretched forward over the top of his canvas

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barrier now, leaning far out beyond where he legitimately might show himself, so that some of the people by the fence turned and laughed and called the attention of yet others to the free show they were having of the half-man half-horse.

Then the horses were off, and all eyes went to follow them in their diminution round the bend, their huddled lengthwise view at the far curve, and the gradual spacing of their bodies on the far side. A mighty shout went up from all the throats on the grand-stand. The bay with the purple jockey was moving up steadily on the gray ridden by the man in light blue. The centaur felt all the muscles in his body growing tense. On they swept, approaching the curve at the west end turn. Now still a third horse, a sorrel with a Negro rider dressed in yellow, was joining that forward group. In his eagerness to witness what happened at the end of the track, the centaur pressed forward with all his might, and lo, the canvas left its

supports at the two ends, and he stumbled forward, free, except for the fallen fabric about his legs. Quickly he kicked himself loose from this, and ran over to the fence. There they came, the three of them, neck and neck it seemed, and the uproar from all sides of the track was now surging higher and higher. Rarely had so thrilling a sight been witnessed on that course. The blood rushed to the face of the young animal standing outside the pales quivering with excitement.

“Let me through! Let me through!” came the

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breathless words from his throat, as he pushed among the people at the fence. They fell back startled before the onslaught, staggering and forgetful of the race, although the foremost group were almost now in front of them. A wild passion shone in the eyes of the centaur, as though he had been drunk. And indeed intoxicated he was. He laid his hands on the fence, while he gazed at the horses, and he shook the rotten palings with his full force. His nostrils were distended, and his breath was coming short and quick. The fence would not give, so with a powerful lunge of his animal torso, he pushed with might and main, just as the animals were rushing by in front of him. The fence, with a ripping sound, gave way before him, and he stumbled through, halted a brief moment, and then went down the track after the vanishing horses, bending forward, intent only on catching up with them and showing them that he could run faster than they.

For a moment, the grand-stand did not catch sight of the new contestant in the race, so intent were the

mob on the legitimate entries, who by this time were tearing around the field in the last and definitive lap. But when the people did suddenly spy the strange spectacle of the straining animal flashing by them, with its bay horse and its naked jockey welded into one, first there came a giant gasp of surprise, and then a howl of laughter fluttered out from the structure, and derisive calls began to rain about the young centaur. He paid them no heed, but went dashing

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on, intent only on the heels of the batch of horses ahead of him, which kicked up an exasperating dust. Every muscle was straining in the young animal in his mad effort, and indeed it was a beautiful sight to see him dashing along the further side of the field, with a glorious surging swing to his body, unmatched by any combination of horse plus rider. Of course, from the very first, he could not even catch up with the racers ahead of him. They had been far away down the track by the time that he had broken through the fence and gained the open stretch of the track. He was not accustomed to such long continued exertion as this, and before he had reached the last turn towards the home-stretch he was breathing painfully, and his eyes were protruding in his head. Still he kept on, with a mad intensity, dogged, fanatical, like an animal gripped with panic, seeing nothing to right or to left. His feet came thundering down in a cluster, only to swing him on again instantly, flying through the air, with the hoofs keeping a splendid even beat on the earth.

The grand-stand, too went mad. Never had there been so exciting a race in all the history of the fairgrounds. What with the close running of the group in front, and the odd spectacle of the misshapen entrant behind, enthusiasm waxed to a dangerous point, and during this last heat, seven women fainted... and lay where they were, for no one would tear himself away from the race until it was ended. Around the last corner they approached, with the

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Negro on the sorrel leading, and the gray under the light blue, at his flank, and the bay, purple rider, bunched beside him. The seven others were strewn hardly a length behind. Fifteen yards further back there came the white spectre of the centaur's body, topping his bay barrel.

And then! Nobody knew how it happened, but the leading sorrel was seen to lunge head forward, throwing his rider. An oath, a scream, a mess of tumbled horses, in a cloud of dust, men running, the grand-stand drawing in its breath and rising like one man to its feet, a riderless horse straying away with his reins hanging,... and straight down the course the galloping form of the centaur, sole survivor of the affair, with flushed red face, and his horse's body black with sweat.

The crowd cast him a glance and then poured down from the grand-stand towards the scene of the casualty, eager as always, to gaze on disaster.

It was Ben Durnan who finally came up to the centaur and took possession of the dazed animal. The

creature was breathless and panting, and nearly reeled over to the fence by the paddock, and he did not look up when he heard the voice of the Durnan boy. Then came running Mr. Dewitt, preoccupied and grimacing, and in his arms he bore the two old horse-blankets, which had first served to conceal the centaur in his progress from the Durnan house to the stall in the Fair grounds. He had never a word for the animal, but silently threw the enveloping garments

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about the shoulders and over the sweating body of the centaur. He was not sure but the episode might yet prove a rich blessing in disguise. His first and sole business was now to get the creature back into seclusion as soon as possible, and begin to charge admission to the populace. The people in the crowded race-track fell back to allow him to pass through with his strange convoy, and already he could hear the shapeless debate going on as to whether or not the centaur was entitled to the prize money for the race. He held his peace and went on. Through the breach in the fence torn by the eager animal he led the creature and reinstated him in the canvas enclosure. The work of once more hitching up the walls was brief, and then, after taking off the blankets and giving the creature a good rub-down, he prepared to step out once more to take up his' "spiel."

Suddenly the centaur seemed struck with a melancholy realization.

"Aw!" he said, gloomily. Mr. Dewitt stooped to fold up the blankets.

“Know what?” asked the animal in dejection. “While I was runnin’, I must o’ forgot, and swallowed Sade’s gum!”

“Without a word, Mr. Dewitt left the place.

“The winner of the afternoon’s big race, the only man-horse in creation, ladies and gentlemen, unique in the history of creation. Entertaining, instructive, and educational. One quarter of a dollar, twenty-five cents...” went on his even voice outside.

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Inside, there was no elation. What was glory, what was fame, what was the triumph of winning the race itself, compared with the disappearance of that beloved talisman, sole souvenir of Sade! He felt lonely without it. He felt himself base thus to have lost the only thing she had ever given him. There was but one consolation... at least he had swallowed it, and somewhere within him that pledge of their faith was roving about in the darkness, and he was keeping it warm. There was something holy and sacred about this thought when it came to him, and he was a little reconciled. He looked down and tried to wonder where the blessed particle was lodged within him.

Then visitors began to arrive, a pretty steady stream of them, more than ever before, and the distraction of seeing them offered him still further assuagement of his grief.

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By a fluke, that afternoon, one person had been a witness of that strange race, who would not ordinarily have been present; and yet he was perhaps the most interested spectator of the whole affair. Doctor Laurence W. Cribble, professor of Greek and Latin at the nearby University of Roosevelt, was standing near the race-track fence, gazing in a mild and ruminative manner at the contest, beside him a young girl, the efficient cause of his attendance at the Fair, which, in all the twenty-seven years that he had been teaching at the adjacent institution, he had never witnessed.

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Tall and stooped, with mild eyes, and a graying beard that only partially masked his weak chin and mouth, he stood looking on at the spectacle with an air of abstraction. Even as his eyes rested on the horses he seemed hardly to see them, but instead, his imagination might have been dallying with hexameters and dactyls. He bore with him a light overcoat, over his arm, and an umbrella, furled and hanging from one hand. For, however slight the contingency might be on this radiantly clear and mellow September afternoon, it *might* turn chilly and there *might* come rain. The young lady accompanying the Doctor was his niece, not his daughter. The Doctor was a virgin.

Then the centaur burst into view, and Doctor Cribble in his surprise changed his umbrella into his other hand. As the animal moved swiftly past him in its race, the Doctor actually hung the umbrella on the fence, and fumbled in his upper coat-pocket for his spectacle-case, whence he drew out his trusty aids and

fitted them to his vision. I may say here that the Doctor left the umbrella hanging there when he later departed, thereby achieving the one and only loss of which he was ever guilty in his whole life.

“Dear, dear!” exclaimed the Doctor to Mattie Belle, his niece. “I never heard of anything so strange in all my life.”

Mattie Belle was at the moment interested in two good-looking University men who were passing behind her, and did not reply.

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“Hello, Chet. Hello, Tommie,” she waved instead.

The Doctor craned his neck for further sight of the classic figure now tearing along the opposite side of the arena, and not for many a day had any physical phenomenon so stirred his curiosity. “Umptyumpety-ump-ta-ump; ta-ump-ta-umpety-ump, ” Mattie Belle heard him quote to himself triumphantly in some foreign tongue as he gazed. Little did she know that the aptness of that Greek quotation, recondite and touched with sly humor, would, in a society less barbarous, have marked the Doctor as a man of distinction. She yawned delicately, and looked up after the good-looking Juniors.

When the tragedy took place, the Doctor leaned forward with real concern, and held his breath. Then when the centaur came swinging through the confusion sound and untouched, he relaxed, and breathed out a deep breath that showed his relief. Men and horses were down, perhaps dead, but this classic creature was

at any rate safe. He even smiled gently, with his eyes fixed on the animal flashing past them.

“I wish I might...”he suggested mildly to the atmosphere in general, “I really should be interested...”

“What?” asked the twentieth century at his elbow, with startling definiteness.

“Oh, yes, my dear,” he replied, kindly, suddenly recollecting her presence. Both she and the umbrella had passed completely from his consciousness for the

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moment, and if the girl had not been animate and audible, she too might have shared the fate of the umbrella.

“I was just thinking how strange it was to see such a creature here in the Fair grounds,” he said.

“Yes, he was funny, wasn’t he!” replied Mattie Belle. “Suppose there’s any fake about it? What was the joke, do you suppose?”

“Oh, I think he is a *bona-fide* centaur, my dear, no doubt about that,” said the Doctor. “I examined him closely as he passed us. And I should like indeed, I think, to,... Here his words trailed off into nothing as he spied the strange animal being led down the track by Mr. Dewitt, with people on all sides of him.

“Do you mind, Mattie Belle?” exclaimed the Doctor, in as near an approach to excitement as he was capable of feeling out-of-doors. “I think I should like to see this creature more closely, if you do not mind. And I might even try to speak with him.”

By this time the Doctor was turning eagerly away from his niece to follow the centaur with his eyes. One side of his light overcoat, black, lined with black silk, was trailing in the dust, an unheard-of incident. Mattie Belle gathered this up over his arm for him, and joined him in his quest of the centaur.

“Here it is,” said the Doctor at length. “But, oh!” The Doctor was disappointed in the unclassical atmosphere evident in the outward mask which shielded the centaur from view. The haphazard

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stretch of canvas, the cheap sign daubed on its bit of bunting, “Half-Horse Half-Man,” with never a mention of the classical name which legitimately might have been employed to designate its form, were disconcerting to the man. Then when Mr. Dewitt issued from the interior and began forthwith to tout, and seemed so utterly unaware of the treasure he had within, the Doctor’s spirit sank within him, and he doubted if he could do what he really wished to do.

“Come on, let’s go in,” suggested Mattie Belle to him, grinning. It was a lark for her, the first lark in this so-far larkless afternoon.

“Wait a minute,” whispered Doctor Cribble nervously behind his hand. He simply could not be seen going into a sideshow at the Fair, with all these people looking on. His whole academic training and scholastic background were against it. He had his reputation to uphold. He wondered if there were not some dignified way by which he could be granted a private viewing, a way by which he might enter

without being gazed at by these hordes. He would have liked to make a quiet and serious investigation of the creature, in a class-room, if possible, or in some decent place at least... (decent, derived from *decerē*, beseem, you know). He looked longingly at Mr. Dewitt as that gentleman continued in the even course of his endless peroration, and the Doctor wished that the man would cease, so that he might approach him in a quiet, dignified way and discuss with him the origin, history, and particulars of

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this interesting case. He shrank from going up crassly and paying the stipulated quarter-of-a-dollar and entering in like any ordinary mortal. His was a more distinguished interest in the creature, a scientific and intellectual curiosity, to be satisfied in a worthy and noble fashion.

Then the Doctor saw the head of the animal over the top of the canvas, peering up towards that far corner of the grounds, where was the dancing-show. A moment's further hesitation, and then, noticing the little embrasure between the walls of the centaur's enclosure and of the Negro minstrel show, where he would be somewhat more secure from public notice, the Doctor slipped over and peered up at the face above him, which was conscious only of its desire to see a beloved form on the far platform.

Clearing his throat with a little dry cough, the Doctor adjusted his spectacles, delicately, and then opened his lips and spoke. It would have been caviare to the general indeed, could the rabble yonder have

heard what he said. For the Doctor lifted his exquisitely quiet voice only a trifle, and fluted forth some liquid syllables, which by the elite would have been recognized as impeccable Greek verses, constituting a greeting such as Homer might have put upon the lips of Achilles.

The centaur dropped his eyes over the edge of the canvas and looked down at the face peering up at him. There was no surprise in his countenance, no recognition of the words, one would have said. But

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then he too spoke. And what he said were the same words as the Doctor had uttered, only with a different modulation, and three vowels were given other values than the Doctor had employed. There was all the difference that we can notice when a Frenchman says "How are you this morning sir," and we answer back, with our accurately native accent, "And how are *you* this morning, sir?" There is no sense of correction implied in the new pronunciation, but we do speak the words differently from the foreigner.

The Doctor's face turned crimson with joy, and he adjusted his spectacles, and blinked his eyes up at the centaur. He said something more, smiling all the while, and letting his good overcoat slip down further than ever into the dust of the Fair grounds. His hands were joined in front of him, as he gazed up with a cherubic countenance at the oracle, forgetful of the world about him, drinking in the sounds that came pouring from the lips of the creature.

For the centaur, forgetful too, seemingly, of all the world, tilted up his head and, swaying slightly as he spoke, began to spout the most mellifluous of human sounds, the fairest words mankind has ever yet heard, verse after verse of dactylic hexameters, the creation of Homer. Rapt, the Doctor stood listening, nodding his head now and then, lifting an eyebrow sometimes over a pronunciation, making mental note of a version, and at last, letting fall his overcoat as he patted his pockets here and there for pencil and paper to jot down a memorandum.

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Mr. Dewitt turned round finally, conscious, amid all the various competitions to which his voice was subjected, that a new and strange current of sounds was running counter to his speech. He spied the head of his exhibit reared over the top of the canvas, and also he saw the delighted face of the old guy, drinking in the words of the centaur without having paid his quarter. Mr. Dewitt's face was distorted with a nervous spasm. Then he stepped down from his box, and darted into the enclosure. Suddenly the public recitation of Greek hexameters was brought to a close, and the free view of the centaur's head was ended. The Doctor seemed surprised, and stood blinking expectantly upwards for a moment, until, suddenly realizing that many eyes in the vicinity were turned in his direction, and that he was standing on his overcoat, he hurriedly gathered up his impedimenta and blushing made his way into obscurity among the crowd. Here he was

finally joined by his niece, who had been frightfully shamed by the old gentleman's actions.

"Most wonderful!" ejaculated Doctor Cribble to her, accentuating his remark with one thin finger raised. His spectacles had slipped crooked, and indeed his wearing them now was a mark of his perturbation, since they were only for reading or close scrutiny. "He bears out my theory entirely. Dear, dear I Only to think. His pronunciation is most..." Then he repeated some of the accents of the centaur to the negligent ears of Mattie Belle.

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He was by this time raised to such an ecstasy that he was bumping into people coming in the opposite direction, and he nearly knocked over a little girl standing in his path. "I must let President Bissel know about this. It is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of."

"Well, I'm nearly famished, and I wish you'd buy me a hamburger, Uncle Laurie," suggested Miss Cribble.

"To be sure, my dear, to be sure!" replied the Doctor. And once more he repeated his hexameters as they stood waiting for her succulent sandwich... with lots of mustard, no onion. She had a "date" that night, she explained laughing to the Doctor. He did not hear her.

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That night it rained, and Doctor Cribble, preparing to attend the annual faculty reception at the Faculty Club rooms, suddenly remembered his umbrella. Fruitless the search for it in his room; it was, beyond peradventure, lost. The Doctor sat himself down in a chair and meditated on this catastrophe. It was out of the question, he felt, that he should attend the festivities that evening. Indeed, he felt, at the moment, that he could hardly ever teach again. But venture out tonight, without his umbrella, he surely could not.

It may be remarked that over on the further side of town, in that hollow known as The Acre, a colored

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gentleman was, from the diametrically opposite reason, concluding that he *would* go out that evening, to show forth his new acquisition. It had cost him one good hour of standing by that umbrella which hung on the fence, safely to gain possession of it.

The Doctor's case was settled for him, however, by a knock on his door, and an invitation to accompany Professor and Mrs. Wilcox in their Ford. He was like a man dazed, and at first he refused all consolation. Then he plucked up courage, and heroically went off despite his loss. He did wish to acquaint President Bissel with his new classical lore.

The Faculty Club was a recent achievement on the campus, a branch of that general spirit of get-together and mutual service which latterly had blossomed out in America under the guise of Rotary and Kiwanis and their ilk, flowers on the single stalk of the humanitarian. Its rooms were located over the

Cafeteria, in a stucco building not very happy in its design, the fruit of some brain in the Engineering College of the institution; the University had thereby been spared the expense of an architect. One long hall, with a gray stone fireplace and a hideous yellow oak piano, boasted of a quantity of excellent Grand Rapids furniture, duly over-stuffed and properly stained to a deep mahogany. Chintz curtains of an art-y pattern hung at the windows in what are known locally as "drapes." The long hardwood floor, ungraced by any covering, lent to the room, however, somewhat of a harsh and uncongenial

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atmosphere, which mounted into the air like a dank miasma, no matter how many faculty feet might be obscuring its blatant nudity. To the side were rooms with checker boards and even a second-hand pool table.

Here, on the present occasion, were gathered together a goodly portion of the *illuminati* of Roosevelt; that is, the faculty, and the faculty wives, and one or two widowed faculty mothers. Evening clothes were not *de rigueur*, and as a matter of fact only four young instructors, just come from older and larger institutions, appeared in their Tuxedos. The other men were most of them in the same clothes in which they had that day taught, although here and there a fresh bit of linen was discernible. The ladies, who in small communities always take to this sort of thing better than do the men, had gone a little further towards the festive in their toilettes, and several gowns, discreet in

color, were cut a little low in the neck, with a gold chain and a cross to take the edge off the bare flesh. One professor's wife, in crimson silk, quite décolleté, appeared almost indecent; and by her vivaciousness some felt that she knew and enjoyed the fact.

There was a Line, extending down one side of the room, headed by the President and his wife, who were hearty in their greetings to the guests this one evening of the year even if their social amenities at other times were slightly tinged with chill, as being most effective in keeping up a proper sense of discipline

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in the academic family. Most of the faculty members greeted the President as "President Bissel," but some of the more formal were heard to mouth the words, "Mr. President," and one small upstart out from Harvard last year actually called him "Mr. Bissel." A silence fell upon the room at sound of the effrontery.

President Bissel presented the professors and their wives to his own quiet spouse, who was a head taller than himself. She in turn gave their names to the sprightly Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, who had a word of somewhat heavy pleasantry for each before handing them over to his nearsighted wife, who was very much of an invalid. She passed them on to the Dean of the College of Engineering, a man appallingly bald, in startling contrast with his wife, who was fairly smothered under her high-piled head of dark hair, of which she was very proud. Then came the widower Dean of the College of Education, the sparkling member of the faculty, a very tall thin man,

who wrapped each passer-by with a garment of his mirthful spinning. His spot in the Line was a very ganglion of rippling merriment, to borrow one of his own favorite psychological terms. Next came the Dean of the College of Agriculture, a man with a nose and horn-rimmed spectacles, who spent most of the evening reassuring polite questioners concerning his new son, three days old, and his wife, at the Hospital. The Dean of Men came next, with a downy rose-colored mat of

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thinning hair and a Vandyke beard, and his wife, who never had been heard to stop talking for two minutes at a time. The Dean of Women closed this more elevated section of the receiving committee, and was hardly recognizable without the blue velvet hat which she had been consistently wearing for the past five years, day and night.

By the time one had come as far as this, one's jaws were beginning to ache with the continued exertion of the social smile and the little bit of talk that one was expected to offer up before each of these luminaries. One's hand and arm were weary, one's brain was inordinately tired, and it would have been pleasant to sink back into the comparative oblivion of the rest of the room. But no, there yet remained the new members of the faculty and their wives to be smiled at and shaken hands with. Fortunately, with most of these, since they were of inferior academic rank, rising hardly higher than assistant professors,... although this year there were two new Associate Professors, and

actually one new “full” Professor,... one was not forced to put oneself out to any great degree. A mere hand-shake to mere Instructors and to their wives, who in almost all cases were brides of the previous summer; a hand-shake and the name repeated, to Assistant Professors; a hand-shake and the name repeated and a smiling bow to Associate Professors; and the full panoply of all this and a bit of conversation besides for the full Professor.

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Not the least irritating part of this lower segment of the Line was the fact that one’s name was constantly getting itself misshaped as one was handed along from stranger to stranger, and one had to be forever stopping to straighten it out. Or else one had to repeat it again as some youngster just out of some Iowa college, thoroughly at his social ease, would say, “What was the name? I don’t think I caught it.” The tail end of the Line came in for some pretty perfunctory greetings, and one breathed a sigh of relief as one turned away from the last, and could relax one’s grin muscles.

On the whole, there was a deal of seemly hilarity along this introductory phase of the evening’s entertainment, and if the average of the social sounds heard along the Line might have been kept up in the remainder of the club rooms and during the rest of the evening, quite a presentable society hubbub would have ensued. But somehow, after the Line had been passed, and one had got outside the sphere of the Big People, gaiety seemed to die out, and odd groups of men and women drifted together like flotsam, and had

apparently but little to say to one another as they sat or stood about the rooms. Ill health and the difficulties of living in Roosevelt seemed chiefly to hold sway in conversation. Lengthy journeys in automobiles during the summer, undertaken apparently with no other objective than the number of miles covered, were effectively related by

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the respective perpetrators thereof; but it might have been noticed that each of these *raconteurs* was chiefly interested in his own mileage, and listened with but a lack-lustre eye to the accounts of his colleague. There was some banter, in certain choice little groups, over divers bits of faculty gossip. Nods and becks and wreathed smiles greeted a mathematics instructor when he entered, accompanying one of the young ladies who taught in the home economics department. The close-cropped hair of another instructor gave rise to what might have seemed to an outsider somewhat exaggerated hilarity in one corner of the room. Intellectual topics, and anything smacking of the “highbrow” in general, were taboo it would seem. The faculty was out, as it said, to enjoy itself.

Into this atmosphere Doctor Cribble brought his grief-laden countenance, mourning over his lost umbrella. Deep under lay his fund of joy over the Greek accents of the young centaur, but on the whole, his was a sobering presence, and he moved down the receiving line like a benign cloud, gracious but yet hardly interested in this contemporary social traffic. Aside from his desire to communicate with President

Bissel, he had no ambition here this evening. He was too wise to expect sympathy from the present company on the subject of his loss. Since the death of Professor Webster last year, he knew that nobody here could appreciate such a matter.

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At first entry, as he was starting down the row of introductions, he tried to stop and speak to the President about his subject of consuming interest.

“President Bissel,” he said, halting for a moment, “I had a most unusual experience this afternoon, most unusual.”

“Ah yes,” replied the head of the University. “Mrs. Bissel, will you...” and he handed the elbow of Doctor Cribble on to Mrs. Bissel, and turned to Professor Wilcox.

The President was a short round-faced man, .with a pince-nez, who was proudest of all of his sense of efficiency. Under his tutelage the institution had waxed from five hundred students to an aggregation of fifteen hundred... an increase of two hundred per cent in ten years, as he was proud of informing that legislature from which biennially he strove to extort yet greater funds. In previous years he had, like Doctor Cribble, been a teacher of Greek and Latin, and it is painful to contemplate the desert stretches of grammatical detail into which he must then have converted the rich pastures of classical literature, he, with his passion for efficiency, so alien to the warm glow of true humanism. He longed, his fingers even now were itching, to find some pretext on which he could rid

himself of what he called the doddering methods of old Cribble, and get in one of the new men, fresh, say, from the University of Chicago, with more life to him. Not too much life, you understand, for that was disconcerting, and

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threw the faculty out of balance; hut one who would concern himself wholly with legitimate scholarly questions. Cribble liked too much to talk about the poetic content of the pieces of literature. He seemed to cherish their meaning above their grammatic and syntactic complexities. Besides, he did not sufficiently worry about the smallness of his classes. He seemed content with one or two good students. It looked bad in the annual report. The problem in all its ramifications swept rapidly through the mind of the President in the moment of his shoving the Doctor on down the line. The man left an unpleasant taste in his mouth.

“I am hoping to have that report of absences from your classes by Monday, Doctor,” was the pleasant social greeting with which the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences met Doctor Cribble, as Mrs. Bissel released his hand. Then turning to his myopic and chronically lethargic wife he said, “The Nestor of the faculty, my dear, Doctor Cribble.” He smiled in vast good humor over his apt classical quip, gently quizzical.

“I trust you are feeling well, this evening, ma’am,” said Doctor Cribble, bending in courtly fashion over the lady’s hand.

“Just about the same,” she replied, bristling slightly, mustering up sufficient energy to be cool towards the man who thought she *could* feel well, she, known to be the greatest invalid in the room.

The Dean of the College of Engineering and his

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wife had no points of contact with the Greek professor except their extended hands, and they passed him on with formal affability. But the Dean of the College of Education made up for their silence by exploding one of his famous verbal bomb-shells at the Doctor.

“Where’s the tome?” he demanded jokingly, pretending to look under both the older gentleman’s arms for an imaginary volume. “Surely my eyes misinform me, Doctor. You don’t mean to tell me that you are here tonight without a book! Will wonders never cease!” His neighbors on both sides laughed; Professor Wilcox coming next laughed; Mrs. Wilcox, just ahead, laughed. Everyone wore his risibilities on a hair-trigger when the Dean was present. It was the thing to do. Doctor Cribble smiled and bowed, and passed on.

“How’s that Harrison boy doing in your class, Doctor?” asked the Dean of Men, when the Greek professor had reached him. Doctor Cribble, by the way, was one of the few who did not ask after the wife of the Dean of the College of Agriculture, in her recent delivery... he had known nothing about it, and even if he had, he would have felt it indelicate to refer to such a matter in a place so public.

“Harrison? Harrison?” said Doctor Cribble. “Have I a young man named Harrison in any of my classes?”

“Sure you have,” laughed the Dean of Men. “I

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wish you’d let me have a report on his work sometime next week.”

“Oh, how do you do, Doctor Cribble,” began the Dean’s voluble wife, keeping a grip on Mrs. Wilcox while still she was reaching on for her next victim. “I was just telling Mrs. Wilcox about the oil painting I have just had framed for our hall down stairs. And so I said to the man in the store, ‘No, I don’t much like those gold frames, let me see something in brown.’ I so much prefer the brown, don’t you? It gives so much richer a tone. I suppose I’m rather addicted to rich tones. The Dean is always telling me that’s my one failing. But I do like a rich tone. Husbands are always so critical. But I will stick up for a rich tone. And so . . . she went on, now happy with two people to whom she could continue the steady run of narrative which had been going on ever since she took up her place in the Line. The story was still running when Doctor Cribble had passed beyond her ken. In the lee of that strong wind of converse, the Dean of Women was that night simply nowhere, and contented herself with starting the names of the passers-by down the precarious journey among the new-comers.

To these, Doctor Cribble was gentle and courteous in his greetings, in a quiet, detached sort of way. He had been through this thing so many, many times

before. Then he stepped aside from the end of the line, to bide an opportunity of further words with the

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President. He was not keenly conscious of his surroundings, the room and its occupants, for he was thinking over the exquisite reciting of Homeric lines which he that afternoon had heard, and his vision was haunted by the classic spectacle of that mad racing figure down the track at the Fair grounds. His cheeks were flushed with a gentle color as he thought of it, and a smile played about his rapt features.

“Come on, Doctor, all the men this way,” finally said a bumptious voice beside him, and he felt his arm swept into a whirlwind towards the side room where stood the pool table. It was that egregious Y. M. C. A. secretary, who was chairman of the Entertainment Committee, so-called, and who, now that the Line had broken up, was promulgating his vivacious game for the evening’s amusement.

A sheet was hung in the wide doorway between the two rooms, and in this a narrow slot had been made. Through this aperture each of the men of the faculty was to protrude his nose, and the fun of the thing lay, of course, in the wild surmises as to the identity of the owner of the organ. Particularly was there fun when a wife proved herself ignorant of her own husband’s feature.

Most of the Big People remained in the room with the ladies while this game was in progress, and were but interested on-lookers. President Bissel and the Deans were discreetly pressed to take part, but upon

their first refusal no further insistence was forthcoming.

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It was readily comprehensible that men of their vast responsibilities could hardly so far relax as thus to disport themselves. Only the irrepressible Dean of the College of Education was sluttish enough to throw away discretion and join in the revels of the madcaps.

Doctor Cribble retired to one corner of the pool room and there wearily seated himself. He did so wish to speak with the President. He tried to get back into the large outer room where President Bissel was still remaining, but his remonstrance was too gentle and uninsistent, and he was forced back into his corner. There was no active call for his nose, to be poked through the curtain, to be sure, for even the forward creatures in charge of the entertainment felt an incongruity about such a proposal. Besides, somehow his participation would not add to the hilarity of the occasion.

The game was a vast success as a “mixer” for the evening, and after its conclusion no trace of stiffness or of aloofness might be discerned among the party. Everybody seemed to know everybody else, and there was a fine chatter audible throughout the rooms.

Dr. Cribble approached President Bissel once more, as the executive sat talking seriously in one corner with the Dean of the College of Education. The latter, since he was now talking with the powers that be, was, for the nonce, a more serious man, as knowing

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on which side his bread was buttered. They both looked up as Doctor Cribble approached, but neither of them yielded one inch.

“Might I tell you my experience now?” asked the Greek professor, smiling gently as he came up.

“Yes. What was it?” replied the President, throwing into his tone, however, absolutely no interest.

“Ah, it was most interesting, indeed, President Bissel, most interesting,” said Doctor Cribble, drawing up a chair. “You will pardon me, I am sure, if I talk for a few moments on Greek accents,” he added, to the Dean.

A shade of irritation crossed the face of the chief executive.

“I thought you were going to tell me about some interesting experience of yours.” He spoke rather sharply to him. The Dean snorted a bit disdainfully, piqued by the Doctor’s assumption that there was any subject on earth which was outside his ken.

“Just so,” smiled the Doctor, edging his chair a little nearer. And then he recounted to the two men briefly his afternoon’s episode with the centaur, and gloried in the fact that the animal’s pronunciation bore out substantially his own theories on the subject.

Needless to say, the two superior men pooh-poohed the whole idea, and were at once both amused and chagrined to think that he could have been taken in by a bit of Fair-grounds faking, and could treat the thing seriously.

“In the first place,” said the Dean, a man of many sciences, “such an animal would be impossible.”

“But I saw it,” remonstrated Doctor Cribble, “and spoke to the thing myself.”

“Hallucination,” said the Dean, shrugging his shoulders and looking away. “Mere hallucination.” He wished the Doctor would not waste any more of the valuable time of the President and himself.

“But what about the whole grand-stand full of people, then?” urged the Doctor courteously.

“Mass hallucination, suggestion,” came back the prompt reply of the man of science. “Or else worse, mass foolishness,” he added, looking at the President, wishing to have that gentleman see the terse humor of the remark.

“As to the use of vowels you were mentioning,” quoth the President, “it is simply Bergman’s old theory revived, isn’t it!” He spoke as though this ascription of theory settled the whole matter. “Even if you did talk with the creature, I should be inclined to say that a hoax, more or less clever, has been devised, and someone has taken the trouble to teach the man impersonating the upper portion of your centaur a few phrases in rather bad Greek. Don’t you think that the more feasible explanation of the whole matter?”

“I think that is very well put, Mr. President,” said the Dean immediately.

Doctor Cribble was silent for a moment, gazing blandly up into the further corner of the room, as though he were seated in the very Vale of Tempe

itself. The mild zephyrs of Thessaly were blowing on his brow, one would have said.

“I had the strangest feeling, while gazing on this phenomenon,” he said gently, “and while listening to his beautiful hexameters, that I was in the presence of a creature truly Homeric. Would it not be possible,” he continued, turning to the Dean, “that he was a sort of... a kind of... ‘throw-back,’ I believe is the word you scientific men employ... a kind of ‘throw-back’ to an extremely ancient animal form ? I merely make the suggestion.”

“You’d better stick to your ancient texts, Doctor,” laughed the Dean, turning once more to the President for appreciation. His calm, scientific superiority in the presence of such uninformed vagaries of opinion was delightful to witness.

On the President’s forehead a distinct sign of irritation was visible.

“I really wish you might go out tomorrow and see this creature,” suggested Doctor Cribble to President Bissel, paying no heed to the Dean’s banter.

The President said nothing in reply, for at that moment the egregious Y. M. C. A. secretary, master of the evening’s revels, approached his presence and, performing a moral prostration before the dignitary, informed him in honied tones that refreshments were now spread for him in the Cafeteria below. The President rose, the Dean rose, Doctor Cribble rose. The two scholastic officials walked away from the academic leper who trafficked with Fair-ground

fabrications, and intellectual probity was in the stiffness of their gait as they moved.

Down-stairs, at the shining black tables of the Cafeteria, the faculty were served by young waiters in white coats, students who were working their way through college. Ice-cream and cake and coffee were dispensed, and somehow, the fact of consuming these comestibles free of charge, in the very room where usually one paid out money for the privilege, lent an added zest to the affair and heightened the festive atmosphere of the occasion. Eyes fairly sparkled about the room.

President Bissel and his wife and a few of the higher luminaries were seated at a little special table with flowers on it. The rest of the company disposed themselves as they could. Doctor Cribble found himself in a nondescript group of chemists, engineers, and the German professor. For the most part, the sexes were segregated, except for husbands and wives, and a daring tableful of young instructors, male and female, who were almost too gay for the room. Their laughter could be heard two tables away.

A gloom might have been discerned upon the features of the President as he sat silently wielding his spoon, hardly lifting his eyes from the plate of ice-cream before him. The jeopardy to the institution, of having in its faculty a man like Doctor Cribble who could yield himself up to such vagaries as this last foolish thing, was heavy upon him, and he

was considering ways and means whereby to rid himself of the incubus. Dismiss him outright he could not, of course, for that pestiferous Carnegie Foundation was abroad in the land, with an eye open for lapses from strictly ethical practice, and so also was that teachers' association group, with which he had already had one or two brushes. But there were methods. He considered reducing the Doctor's salary for the following year. The man had had a bad cold the previous session, and had lost two weeks of classes. If such a thing happened this year again, he would feel himself justified, "for the Doctor's own good," in cutting down his courses and also halving his salary. He could almost feel himself dictating the crisp sentences into the impersonal ear of his efficient dictaphone. Maybe then the old man would take a hint and move on. This problem of getting rid of the superannuated was one of his worst problems, mused the President as he finished his cake. Meticulously he left a small portion of the pastry on his plate, as also a minute remainder of the ice-cream, remembering that social usage demanded this elegant manifestation of the absence of appetite, the possession of a stomach already filled even before partaking of the present refreshments. As he raised his serviette to his lips he looked across the room at Doctor Cribble, who at that moment coughed slightly. Hope flared up in President Bissel's breast, but he was a patient man. and showed no outward sign.

“That cake was very nice, Mr. Stone,” said Mrs. Bissel as the proprietor of the cafeteria came quietly towards their table to see that all was going well.

“Some more water for President Bissel,” admonished the proprietor in a low tone to one of the white-jacketed students, before acknowledging the kind remark of the lady.

“Did any of you hear about the funny thing that happened out at the Fair ground this afternoon?” he asked, with his eye on the President. “A freak from one of the side-shows broke loose and got out on the track in the middle of the big running race. I wasn’t there, but my colored cook back here was just telling me. He saw it all.”

None of the dignitaries at the table had been present at the Fair grounds. President Bissel winced at mention of the colored cook who had substantiated the tale of Doctor Cribble. A smile flickered at the corners of the mouth of the Dean of the College of Education, and he looked first at the President, who did not see him, and then across the room at the professor of Latin and Greek.

“This settles it,” President Bissel was saying to himself. “Colored cook! Wants me to go out and look at things with a colored cook! Tomorrow morning I shall write to the man, reducing him to two thousand.”

Mr. Stone was concluding his Negro cook’s version of the tale amid great, although restrained, amusement at the high table. He had somewhat abridged

its length when he saw how silent and preoccupied was the chief dignitary.

Doctor Cribble had that day lost something more than his umbrella.

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Outside, the rain was falling heavily, dropping from the eaves of the Club-house in runnels abnormally swollen. Tons of water were descending on the campus every hour, and had been doing so all the evening. Rapidly the paved streets of the hilly little town were being washed to their original clean condition. Unpaved streets, and alleys, were taking on their good comfortable hoggishness, in which some of them would wallow all the winter. The countryside was faring better, for natural phenomena do not work such patent hardship on hills and streams and the haunts of birds and animals. Farm houses suddenly remembered leaky roofs once more, to be sure, and dish pans and crocks and wash basins and tubs were quickly put under spots in the ceiling, whence a steady drip-drip immediately began to spatter into their noisy centres. Cows and horses, hogs and sheep, were comfortable in the depths of roomy sheds warm with the heat of their own accumulated dung. Chickens roosting side by side in long rows in their houses wakened to hear the steady downpour on their roofs, and then, a cock having crowed shrilly to hurry up the liberating dawn, they

settled down into drowsy sleep again. It was a good night to sit in front of an open fire, with a pipe and a book, and after a while an apple, and so to bed.

But the Fair grounds!

Suddenly the cardboard, clear-weather shoddiness of the whole aggregation was revealed to the world. Never was the blatant infidelity of man more vividly set forth than in the spectacle now enacting out there where all the week the public had frolicked under clear sunny skies or beneath the countless electric bulbs that blotted out the stars. Tent roofs sagged with the wet, eager to burst through on the slightest provocation. With startling rapidity the open spaces between the tents and booths grew inimical to man and would not let him pass, churning into a very fury of inconstant sticky mud. Strange slopes, never before noticed, now miraculously developed into water-courses, hilariously leading rivulets into the midst of company who had nowhere to flee. Men grew wan and pinched behind their turned-up collars, and women, who had all the week seemed the epitome of all that is brazen and self-confident, now published abroad the secret heavy coughs that racked their chests and they could not keep warm inside their cotton sweaters. Homelessness stalked relentlessly through the grounds that night, and all his hideous bleakness was revealed. At first breath of disaster, the public, like rats from a doomed ship, had scurried away, leaving these their entertainers to fend for

themselves. Timon, stripped of his gold of agreeable weather, was deserted instanter of his friends, God save the mark.

At first signs of rain late in the afternoon Mr. Dewitt had cast up an eye wise with long years of open air living, and set forthwith about his duties. Down came the painted sign, down came the canvas walls, as the silly public began its nefarious rush for cover, which within an hour was an utter rout.

“Think it’s goin’ to rain much, Barney?” called over a fellow-showman.

“Yeh!” nodded Mr. Dewitt briefly, without lifting his head from his work.

“What makes you think it’s for good?” asked the man after a moment. “It may let up in a little.”

“It’s been piling up there in the west all afternoon,” replied Mr. Dewitt grimly, “an’ it’s good night for this year, I can tell you that. Goin’ to rain all night and all tomorrow. Just when things was gettin’ started good too.” His features shied to the left as he raised himself, holding the folded tarpaulin.

The centaur was standing insouciant of the raindrops which fell upon his body, accustomed as he was to being out in all kinds of weather. He no more objected to them than do you or I if our hands or face are wet with mist. When Mr. Dewitt returned, the two of them started off down the lane between the booths. The man was walking in front now, and not leading the animal. A black despair seemed to

rest on the features of Mr. Dewitt, and he did not seem to care whether his charge followed along or what became of him. Hardened by his week's experience, the centaur followed less timorously than had been the case early on Monday morning. He was more accustomed now to having curious eyes fixed upon his body. Yet still he was not totally at his ease, and he kept his eyes alert as he walked along.

Over to the sheds where they had slept all that week they went, and darkly Mr. Dewitt entered into the slatternly structure. He seemed lacking in any further interest concerning the centaur, who felt suddenly very much alone in the world, especially after the solicitude which had been manifested in his behalf all the past two weeks.

Seating himself on a bale of hay that had been partially opened, Mr. Dewitt took from one waistcoat pocket a slim roll of bills. From another waistcoat pocket he withdrew a handful of silver. Applying himself, with the aid of a moistened thumb, to the counting of this money, which represented his available and sole wealth, he found that he had in his hands the sum of \$14.72. Stored in his memory were debts to divers associates on the Fair grounds incurred for the establishing of his week's attraction, and these amounted to \$16.25, due forthwith. Expenses immediately incurable included transportation to the Benton County fair, amount unknown, but considerable; rental of the centaur for next week, seventy-five cents, a sum that could be handled; payment

of the concession fee to the Benton County officials, probably not less than here, fifteen dollars, due on Monday; food and shelter between now and Monday, for a resourceful man a negligible sum.

Result: Assets, \$14.72; debits immediate and most closely imminent, say \$50.00. Grand total, a red ink item of some thirty odd dollars.

Without a word, the man folded up his bills, stowed away the silver, the nickels, and the coppers, and left the shack. He was a man of action, was Mr. Dewitt, a man who could, when occasion demanded, think straight and act sharply. The centaur lowered his head and watched the retreating man, under the low slanting lintel of the door.

“You wait here,” commanded Mr. Dewitt.

Out through the wide vehicular gateway he went, that portal by which he had entered, so full of hope, the previous Monday morning, leading in his gold mine... a lode which he had now in sheer disgust abandoned. Straight over to the porch of the red store he made his way, and there, with equal directness he singled out the form of Mr. Holcomb, and having caught that gentleman’s eye, he crooked a finger at him and beckoned him aside. The preacher reared up his heavy hulk from the box where he had been reclining at his ease, and dusting off his overall trousers negligently, he approached Mr. Dewitt.

“Know where I can get any hooch?” said that gentleman, coming right to the point.

“No sir!” exclaimed Mr. Holcomb emphatically, turning away.

Mr. Dewitt made a face at the man's back, but seemed otherwise unperturbed at his rebuff. And as a matter of fact, the reverend gentleman did not go far in his retreat from the suggestion. His mere turning away, and not actually going away, might have lent hope to a man not sunk in despond.

"Oh, all right, if you can't," replied the adroit Mr. Dewitt. "I got ready money for the man who can, though. And Bert Watson said you..."

"How much was you countin' on payin'?" said the other, swinging round at mention of the name.

"That depends on what it is."

"Corn," said Mr. Holcomb succinctly.

"Good stuff? All right, I mean?"

"I'll say it is," replied the preacher, spitting off the edge of the porch.

"How much do you want for it?"

"I ain't got any," spoke Mr. Holcomb, looking at Mr. Dewitt as though the man had insulted him.

Once more Mr. Dewitt was unperturbed.

"Where can I get holt of it?" he continued.

"How much do you want?"

"How much is it?"

"Two and a half a pint."

"Gimme two. Where'll I get 'em?"

"Well now," opined the minister. "If you'll jest step over and look at my wood pile, and accidental like leave five bucks under the last log on top of the left hand end, and then go way and gimme time enough to come out from the house and git a armload of wood fer the kitchen stove, there might happen

just to be layin' round something like what you been talkin' about."

Without a word further, Mr. Dewitt dived out into the now steadying rainfall, and crossed to examine the wood pile, which stood about twenty-five feet away, behind the old abandoned store that screened the place from the view of the red store. Equally discreet was the departure of Mr. Holcomb for his home, which lay beyond. Three ones and a two were deposited by Mr. Dewitt as requested, and then in the growing dusk the figure of Mr. Holcomb appeared, coming out from the house. He fumbled for logs in the piled stack, there was a liquid clink, and then, with an armful of wood, the man of God retreated to the back door. Mr. Dewitt dashed over to the appointed spot, and a moment later there was a gurgle and then the man shivered slightly. The two sides of his coat had a new pendulous swing to them as he walked quickly away in the direction of the rapidly drowning Fair grounds.

Hastily the reader must be reassured that it was not from mere wanton transgression of the law that Mr. Holcomb thus violated the fundamental constitution of his country. The obliquity of his actions was due to another and more subtle cause than the low gain of filthy lucre. That was an inducement, to be sure, and he had not scorned the proffered bills. Still brighter in his eyes, however, shone the second part of the transaction, which he now moved to fulfill, as he hastily descended the porch steps and crossed the

open stretch towards the home of the Kelloggs. The illicit dealer in contraband liquor was now sunk in the moral reformer, and Mr. Holcomb's lips were tight closed in the thin straight line which marked him a determined man of religion.

"Mr. Kellogg home?" demanded the preacher, with that scant show of courtesy which his religious dominance permitted him to wear.

"No, he ain't, Reverend. He ain't at the Mill, this week, you know."

"I know. That's what for I want to see him. Know where I can find him quick?"

"Why, he's over on the Fair grounds some place. Ain't anything the matter, is there?"

"No," said the minister, meditating. "You tell him,... You tell him, if he comes in and I ain't seen him, that I got a case for him over here quick. He'll understand."

"Sure." The woman disliked intensely letting the preacher slip through her fingers without having found out from him his news. He was already crossing the open stretch once more, with the rain beating down upon him.

Despite the heavy precipitation, Mr. Holcomb plunged on towards the wide gate of the grounds, which now stood unguarded and yawning, with only a tightly-closed Ford taxi plowing out through its deepening mire from time to time. The preacher grasped closer the upturned collar of his coat, and moved ahead.

He was on the look-out for the shape of his neighbor, Mr. Kellogg, who was wearing, all this week, he knew, a bright star of gleaming nickel, which clothed him with powerful authority. One of the "special constables" he was, commissioned for the period of the fair, eager sleuths on the look-out for evil doers; and all the more eager, for the fact that they were paid a certain percentage of the fines levied as a result of their activities. He made more, generally, this way, on special occasions, than by working in the Mill.

At last Mr. Holcomb found his man, standing in the doorway of the chicken pavilion, seeking shelter from the rain although still with a menacing gleam in his eye, ready for malefactors. The minister drew him further into the building with a sideward nod of the head.

"Got another case for you," said the reverend gentleman in a low voice. "Just sold him two pints."

"Who is he?" demanded the officer, scenting emoluments afar. Every "drunk" he could pick up meant one dollar for himself; although in the present case, of course, as per contract, he would have to pay over fifty cents to the preacher for his information. Still, fifty cents was not to be sneezed at, particularly as it looked as if the Fair was over for this year.

"The fellow that roomed over at Durnans last week," replied the preacher. "The one what squinted and winked, you know."

"And had that funny Durnan colt over here as a side-show," added Mr. Kellogg, nodding.

"I don't know nothin' about that," said Mr. Holcomb doggedly, morally as opposed to the Fair as ever.

"Where's he at, now?" asked the Law.

"I don't know. I seen him around that shack across from the chapel several times this week. Maybe he hangs out there."

"I'll go right over there," said Mr. Kellogg, turning up his collar.

"You..." suggested Mr. Holcomb as he moved along in the trail of the officer towards the back door.

"I'll fix you up all right," said the other, briefly. "If it goes right."

"And you..." further suggested the minister, still trailing between the rows of chicken-coops on benches.

"Now, trust me, Reverend. Your name'll be kep' out of it. Sure."

The man bent his head and left the building.

"Damned old skinflint, always thinkin' about his money," muttered the Law to himself as he walked. Mr. Holcomb in the doorway, was content, with a moral duty amply achieved.

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"Hell, you can't sing no more'n a jackass," said a voice in the dusky gloom of the shed. And Mr. Dewitt further expressed himself on the subject.

Through, the steady drum-fire of the rain on the roof and the dull obligato of the eaves, which here and there was varied by the even thud-thud of a leak inside, the words of the man showed forth a transmogrification, due to alcohol. When, the next moment, he lifted his own tenor voice and began, with a plangent rhythm, to sing, "Our cook, he was a dirty man," it was easy to see that Mr. Dewitt did not compare his own singing unfavorably with that of a jackass. His foot, however, keeping strict account of the time in the thick carpet of disintegrated dust on the floor, unfortunately raised a cloud, which cut short his singing and caused him to cough.

"Pshaw! That was goin' good, too," he said. "I guess I'll have to wash out my throat."

And wash it out he did, with a succession of comforting swallows from one of Mr. Holcomb's bottles.

"That's rot-gut, my boy," he added, shivering as he replaced the cork with a slap of his palm. "But we got to have it. Good old rot-gut."

"Well, I know another one, then," suggested the second voice in the gloom, with a half-giggle at the end of his offer. The young centaur was evidently not offended by the previous discouraging comment on his singing, and indeed, to judge by these few words, he seemed to be in no mood to be offended by anything whatever that might come to pass.

"All right, cocky, le's hear it," said Mr. Dewitt.

"My throat's awful dry," replied the animal, and then laughed hilariously at his own cleverness.

“Shut your face! Not so loud. Somebody’ll hear you,” remonstrated the human being. “Here!” The flat bottle was extended, and received, and tilted, without more ado. The centaur, in his turn, shuddered, and wiped his mouth. Before replacing the cork, Mr. Dewitt wiped off the mouth of the flask, looked at its contents against the half-light of the doorway, and then solemnly drained it dry.

“That’s that!” he said, as he carefully fitted the stopper and then flung the container out the door.

“All right, prima donna, chortle away! I’m listening!” he said, and leaned back luxuriously against the hay.

What would have seemed to our modern unaccustomed ears a mournful and monotonous chanting was heard then in the dark confines of the rain-besieged little structure, as the centaur lifted his head and plunged forthwith into a song seemingly without beginning and without end, full of strange intervals and odd quavers, on words which bore no meaning whatever to the consciousness of Mr. Dewitt. The centaur was immensely in earnest, however, and with a maudlin intensity threw his whole being into the emotional performance. His voice was already a steady sort of baritone, and as he sang, his hands went up, and he seemed to be twanging at an invisible instrument held against his side. In his heart at that moment were two things: the love of Sade, and a nostalgic yearning for “that other time,” one of whose remembered songs he was singing.

Mr. Dewitt lifted his head humorously and howled like a dog.

And just then a man's foot hurriedly projected itself into view from beside the door outside, and the form of Mr. Kellogg was visible a second later in its entirety. The star leered dimly in the direction of Mr. Dewitt. The singing ceased.

A quick gesture towards his side coat pocket was Barney's first reaction to the man's coming, but at the same instant the Law also reached towards a pocket, and Mr. Dewitt found himself looking into a short muzzle.

"Hand it over," demanded the Law. "Quick!"

"Aw, gee, officer, have a heart!" blurted out Mr. Dewitt. "I ain't got nothin'. Can't a fellow sing a little nowadays without havin' the Law bustin' in on him?"

"Cut out the talk and hand over that hooch. Hear me?" insisted Mr. Kellogg, moving closer to Mr. Dewitt, while still presenting the repeater towards his body.

Mr. Dewitt shrugged his shoulders.

"That's what comes of havin' ginks like William Jennings runnin' around loose! Fat lot of liberty we get, I'll say!"

He arose without more ado, albeit a bit unsteadily, and lifted one arm as though for a tailor's measurement. The movement swung out his coat-pocket for the Law's rifling. But as Mr. Kellogg extended his hand, Barney seemed to reconsider.

“Listen here, old thing!” he said, affably, tapping the officer’s shoulder, “Let’s compromise.” The word came not so glibly from his tongue as it is here written, and he himself laughed good-humoredly over his inability to articulate distinctly.

“How much you want, an’ we’ll call it square? Huhn?” He stooped to peer into the Law’s face almost affectionately.

“You’re drunk,” replied Mr. Kellogg, “and you got liquor on your person. An’ if ever you fall into the hands of that there judge it’s goin’ to go hard with you, my boy.”

The appositeness of this answer was not lost even on the addled wits of Mr. Dewitt. “I know,” he agreed, “that’s the Gospel truth, every word of it. I’m willin’ to pay anything reasonable.” He seemed to be backing up the veracity of a life-long friend.

The Gospel truth! Gospel! Suddenly Mr. Kellogg remembered the Reverend Mr. Holcomb, and his backbone stiffened. Even if he had wished to adjust matters with this offender, on a private pecuniary basis, he would not dare do so, for fear of the preacher.

“No, sir,” he said sternly. “You’re a-goin’ to hand over that there hooch, and then you’re a-goin’ to town with me.”

He tightened his grip on the repeater once more, and reached for Mr. Dewitt’s pocket. Barney stepped back, and a quick struggle ensued, brief but

definitive, which left Mr. Dewitt prone, and the officer hatless, but in his hand was the pint bottle.

As he raised himself, there came a quick stampede of hoofs behind him, and the centaur lurched forward.

“Don’t you hurt him, now!” he admonished the Law, pressing close, undeterred by the sight of the repeater, which meant nothing to him. His bulk loomed large in the dusk.

“Stand back, there!” ordered Mr. Kellogg grimly. He was frightened by the sudden apparition towering over him, and backed towards the door. He slipped the “evidence” into his coat-pocket.

The centaur stooped and gave Mr. Dewitt an aiding hand.

“You hurt?” he asked.

Barney merely brushed off his clothes silently, Sullenly.

“Come out here!” ordered the officer. “And be quick about it too.”

The centaur whispered something briefly to Mr. Dewitt, who made no reply but started towards the door. Immediately behind him as he issued into the rain came the animal, who took up his station just beyond a stump nearby, relic of a tree cut down for fire-wood the year before.

“You come along quiet, now,” commanded Mr. Kellogg, approaching with repeater still ready.

Then a drunken whirl-wind loosed itself upon the man, and simultaneously his chin and his more dangerous

hand were knocked awry. The attack, as coining from one partially incapacitated by ‘corn,’ was maladroit

and awkward. But Mr. Kellogg was but a novice at this business of self-defence, and he stumbled backwards, and sat down rather violently on the ground, with such impetus that he rolled on back and knocked his head on a rock.

“Now!” exclaimed Mr. Dewitt excitedly, turning clumsily in the direction where stood the centaur.

“Step on this!” said the animal, indicating the stump. “Here!” He lent a steadying hand, and in a moment Mr. Dewitt had mounted the block and was hoisting a slow leg over the horse’s back.

“Now, hold on to me!” said the centaur, and off he moved in the direction of the gate, as rapidly as his untoward burden would permit.

Sitting up, Mr. Kellogg saw the strange spectacle of the escape. He scrambled to his feet and set off through the slippery clay mud after them.

“Halt!” he yelled, and raised his repeater. The burdened creature ahead plunged steadily onwards, slipping also in the yellow mire.

“Halt!” yelled the officer, still louder, and hoping to himself that he was not going to have to fire his weapon.

“Halt!” he yelled a third time, breathless with the exercise of plowing through the wet muck. And at the word, since he was losing out in this race, he fired. Simultaneously, the horse was seen to stumble and go forward on his knees, which, because of the

alcohol, were not responding as readily as usual to the commands of his head.

Mr. Dewitt rolled on over the body of the centaur into the sticky clay, and was heard to curse heavily as he picked himself up, wet and filthy. The officer ran up, on feet preternaturally swollen with their accretions of the adherent earth.

“You’ll pay for this, all right!” he admonished Mr. Dewitt, and from a hip he drew out his handcuffs.

The centaur was whimpering slightly, and looking down at one hind hoof. He struggled to his feet as though he were dazed, and then, still whimpering, he set off towards the gate, and this time the man did not fire at him. Out through the dusky portal he fled, and off to the right, making for the Durnan home as straight as he could go. He limped slightly with that hind hoof, and mixed with the mud on his leg there was a little trickle of blood.

He wanted only one thing at the present moment. Sade was forgotten. Mr. Dewitt was left to shift for himself unaided. Even Carry was not the lode that was drawing him home. Belle he wanted. The old mare whom he had come to be ashamed of, he now was seeking with all his heart, straight as an arrow loosed on its way. Out on the darkening highway, where the earth was harder, he broke into a gallop. And as he raced home, he was crying. “Mama! Mama!” he bawled, this great creature who but a moment ago was a defier of the vested authority of the state.

In the Durnan barn, old Belle heard the sound above the steady patter of the rain, and stopped her feeding and listened with raised ears. Then she

whinnied gently and went over to the door to look out into the twilight. The galloping hoofs and the raised infantile cry in the darkness disturbed her spirit. At the gate the crying ceased, and only a low whimper was again audible. But as he fumbled with the fastenings, which he now was beginning somewhat to understand, he seemed to grow more conscious of the pain in his fetlock. He was eager to be inside. Finally he passed in, leaving the gate wide behind him. Belle whinnied once more, standing in the shelter of the barn, and he passed over quickly to her side.

And then... suddenly he seemed to realize that not here could he find assuagement for the woe within him. Old Belle could not comfort him. Where could he turn for peace? He did not even touch the old mare that had given birth to his body. Instead, a new fit of sobbing burst forth within him, and going over to the side of the door, he leaned against the jamb, with arms high raised above his head, and there he cried as though his very heart would break, long and silently.

Ben Durnan's voice could be heard, expostulating to his father on the porch over the fact that the gate stood open. With a lantern Mr. Durnan came out to the stable.

"It's that there colt! " he said. "Here he is."

"He's bleedin'," added Ben, stooping. "Steady,

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boy! "Whoa! Well, I'll be! Look's like a shot wound. Only skin, though."

"No, it ain't neither, it looks like it went deeper'n that to me," said Mr. Durnan, examining the wound.

“Who do you suppose done that?”

Steadily the rain descended in relentless masses.

The centaur sniffed under his breath as he looked down on the two men who were concerned, in the light of the lantern, over his injury. Their touch was pleasant to him, and he felt relief in their very anxiety over his welfare. But that did not fully comfort him. The warm water they brought out from the kitchen felt good on his wound. He cried out when the ensuing lotion hurt him. And then the rough bandage they applied brought a certain sense of peace and well-being.

But when they had gone, with never a word for him other than they might have spoken to any other injured horse about the place, he fell once more into a miserable fit of weeping, and leaned his head against the door and moaned. He wanted... oh, he didn't know what he did want!

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Briefly follows the chronicle of the woes of Mr. Dewitt, fast in the hands of the Law.

To town the two men went forthwith, traveling in the three-year old second-hand Ford of Mr. Kellogg, which perforce he cranked by hand, a process which always when it was raining seemed to require innumerable trips to and fro between the crank and

the levers of adjustment on the wheel. On such occasions the machine always seemed to become peculiarly fastidious in its demands. Mr. Kellogg's

spirit was not thereby ameliorated towards his prisoner. Straight to the jail they sped, since Mr. Dewitt was patently in an inebriated state, and there he spent the night, not uncomfortably, since he slumbered most soundly, unconscious until dawn.

At nine the next morning he mounted, accompanied, to the top floor of the court-house, where was installed the Justice court. A little old gentleman ruled here, in a room redolent of much indulgence in tobacco in all its forms, and this official proceeded to hear as much of the case as he cared to listen to. He was quite deaf, but had a little electric telephone arrangement, which he lifted to his ear whenever the officer of the law wished to communicate with him. At other times he heard nothing, but glared at the prisoner as though the things he was saying were too preposterous to be credited.

“I’ll fine him the maxium, all right!” he exclaimed after hearing the preliminary statement of the man’s offences. “If he’d a-pleaded guilty, I might’ve give him the minium.”

“But I did plead guilty!” asseverated the prisoner, gloomily flicking up his right eyebrow for a moment.

The words fell on deaf ears, since the telephone was down.

Truly appalling was the list of charges prepared and pressed against Mr. Dewitt. Beginning with the

possession of liquor, on down through breach of the peace, drunkenness, and resisting arrest, it wound up with assault and battery. The fines imposed by the

relentless little gentleman, together with the costs, totalled something over \$190.00.

“Why not make it a even two hundred and be done with it!” muttered the prisoner under his breath, winking solemnly at the Justice.

The paltry contents of his emptied pockets, \$9.72, were negligible under the circumstances. Bond, he asserted, was out of the question. Payment of the fines and costs was equally unthinkable. From no possible source could he suggest the production of so vast a sum of money in his behalf. The alternative, he knew, was the sitting out of the assessment, in the county jail, at the calculated rate of six bits a day, Sundays included. Free food, light, room, water, and heat were to be his, such as they were, for the winter and the spring, at the expense of the county, he realized. His head, just at the present moment, would not allow him to figure how long this somewhat monotonous form of entertainment gratis would continue. He shrugged his shoulders.

“Let’s go!” he said blithely, wrinkling his nose.

He had not a worry in the world, for the next eight months, at least.

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Worries were meanwhile thick about the head of the centaur, however, beginning with the closely intimate

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ache which filled his whole cranium, child of the liquor imbibed the day before. All night long it was

with him, and with the dull breaking of the dawn, it still was unassuaged. Another ache he felt, a more spiritual pain, the intense desire to lay eyes upon Sade. During the night there was a touch of fever upon him, from the wound and the alcohol, and the centaur had visions of long talks and rides with the lady of his love. If, then and there, his dreams might have been embodied in the flesh, the centaur would have lived in a world where forever and ever he walked slowly along amid trees and fields, with Sade seated upon his back, holding on to him about his waist. Ever and anon she would hand him a stick of chewing-gum, and she would squeal most charmingly sometimes, fearful of slipping off. And he would step high and go proudly bearing his burden. He would take her on parade before the piping figure down among the trees, too, and show her off before those disdainful hussies who laughed and fled and never let him see them. Then, suddenly, there would appear the unicorn, and he would let Sade slip safely to the ground, and he would go forth and do battle for her safety, and put the creature to rout in ignominious fashion, and return to Sade laughing quietly, dusting off his hands; and she would offer him another stick of gum, and he would put down his palm for her to step in, so that she could mount.

He stirred dully, and groaned, and then settled himself to sweet reveries once more, leaning his head

against the side of the barn. A mouse scuttled past, squeaking, but he did not notice it. His fetlock was

throbbing, but he forgot it. Moonlight was about him instead, and on and on he stepped, happy in the weight upon his back. Kisses there were none, for the centaur knew no kisses, and had not, thus far at any rate, brought back their memory from the "other time." Sade, too, in this vision of his, was strangely satisfied with the long idyllic stroll which he pictured, and asked nothing better than forever to admire him and now and then to proffer a fresh stick of chewing-gum. Then they came to a house, and together they went into it. This was a wonderful new part of the vision for the centaur, for he had never actually been inside a dwelling, and the experience, together with having Sade beside him, represented his two most cherished desires. Sade sat in a chair and rocked violently, which always seemed to him the apotheosis of the human being. His own posture was less distinct in his vision. He leaned an elbow on the top of a folding bed, such as the Wellses possessed, which the day showed forth as a chest of drawers, with real drawer pulls. And then Sade smiled upon him, and offered him graciously another stick of chewing-gum. He sighed with content, and stirred once more.

When later he rose to his feet, the centaur found that he could not stand upon the injured hoof. Even to make his way to the door was the matter of five

or six most painful steps, and there he stopped. Half-hopefully he had wondered if he might not make his way out through the gate and down the road and into the fair grounds, and there find Sade. The rain had

slackened to an intermittent dripping, under a low gray sky that promised more rainfall. The world seemed deserted, desolate. His head ached frightfully. He knew the hope of his journey was vain. He could not possibly make it. Fondly he stood and gazed down in the direction of the Fair grounds. Would he never see her again? He felt, at that moment, as though he had exhausted all earthly experience. Life he had tested, and it was hardly worth the living.

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On Sunday the rain was still dully descending in a listless way, as though it lacked the energy to turn itself off and from sheer inertia was just keeping on.

About half-past two in the afternoon, Daniel knocked at the same side-door of the house on the hill, and again the timid feeling swept over him that perhaps he was intruding, it might be that a look of irritation was sweeping over the Lady's face at this very moment at sound of the rapping. He had enjoyed their talks to the full, and so had she seemed to enjoy them too, yet still it seemed to him now almost presumptuous that he should imagine anything but chagrin on her part at thus having her

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Sunday afternoon invaded. Under the sound of the desultory drops from the trees he once more wished that he had not come.

Then the door was swept open, and his name was called out to him gaily, and the screen door was flung

wide.

“Oh, I’m so glad to see you!” she cried in her rich voice. “I just knew you would come! Take off your wet coat and hang it here. Are your feet wet, my dear? I’m going to give you some nice dry slippers. Shan’t I get you some dry socks too?”

She was enveloped in a painting apron, and had her palette and a handful of brushes. With gay eyes she looked upon him, and then led him along by the hand into the little room to the right, where they had sat a week ago, when she had been in so different a mood. Daniel reassured her about his shoes, which he asserted were not wet. As a matter of fact, of course they were soaked, but Daniel knew that holes loomed large in each of his socks, and these he could not reveal to her. The thought of his toes, pink and visible, in her presence, sent him blushing violently.

“I know they’re wet!” she admonished him, with a playful finger that pointed at him delicately and then touched his cheek. She had laid aside her palette, and held a pair of house shoes, bordered with black fur. “And I won’t look if you don’t want me to.” She laughed pleasantly at him, and Daniel blushed again, and exulted in the warm feeling of her

complete understanding of his thought. He sat on the end of the couch and, turning away, did as she bade him, at least as far as the slippers were concerned.

“I’ll put these in front of the fire,” he said, carrying out his shoes into the dining-room where a log was burning on the hearth. He had a ridiculous guilty

feeling, he did not know why, as he carried his discarded footgear. But the slippers did feel good.

“And you’re going to be a good boy and pose for me this afternoon,” she said, as he came back into the room. “I’ve been painting a lot this week, and I just need you.”

Over into the big room across the hall they went, where, she explained to him, the long north windows gave the best light for inside painting, quite like a studio. In one corner there stood a chair, with a brilliant background of crimson velvet, evidently already arranged for him, and towards this she gently pushed him.

“For a long time I’ve been wanting to do this,” she said, “paint you, I mean. And this may be the last time for several months that I’ll get a chance.”

“What do you mean?” asked Daniel slowly. “Are you going away?” He tried to smile, not feeling that it was right for him to show how deeply he would feel the loss. Then he gulped.

“My lord and master thinks that we had better spend the winter up in St. Louis,” she replied, going over before her easel, where a canvas already stood,

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partially worked on. “I’m to go up, this week, sometime.”

Daniel stood dubiously in front of the chair arranged for him, and he looked very gloomy.

“It’s a good thing I didn’t come to work for you, after all, isn’t it, this winter, then!” he said.

“Oh, you wicked person, that’s just the very reason why I’m going,” she replied, and there was daring in the look she gave him. For a moment silence hung between them, while the boy traced the pattern of the chair with one finger.

“Now, sit down, dear, and let me begin. This light won’t last long this afternoon. Isn’t that a glorious bit of color I’ve got behind you? It’s only an old dressing-gown, but it’s a color fit for a king!”

The boy was awkward and self-conscious as he sat in the chair, wondering what, in this new experience, he was supposed to do.

“You just sit and watch me paint, that’s all,” she said smiling at him reassuringly. “I’ve got part of it already thrown in, and I want to catch your likeness this afternoon. It’s only a sketch sort of thing, anyway, you know. I must have something to take along to think of you. You can talk to me, if you like. Head a little higher, that’s all.”

He felt silly, at first, but as she fell to mixing her colors with her long brushes, and encouraged him to talk while she looked first at him and then at her canvas, he finally was accustomed to the ordeal, and told her about the centaur’s having been shot, and

Mr. Dewitt’s imprisonment. She worked deftly, with firm quick strokes, turning her head now this way, now that, sometimes narrowing her eyes at him, hut always intent, too, on what he was saying, and starting him off again on his talking. In his interest he finally cocked up one knee, with his hands caught about it. She liked

that, and nodded to him as he talked to her. His very dark hair against that brilliant coloring was magnificent indeed. And she revelled in the pleasure of the spectacle.

“Yon haven’t said anything about my sketches,” she said finally, when a silence seemed to have fallen upon them. “I have been rummaging about among some of my old studies from the life-class up at the Art Institute, stacked away in the garret, and I brought some of them down for you to see.”

She had stopped to rest for a moment, and Daniel followed a wave of her hand. He could hardly believe what he saw. For there, perched on the mantelpiece, was a sketch in oils, full length, of a man who, as Daniel said to himself, hadn’t a stitch on, and seemed not in the least to mind it, standing in easy nonchalance, turned three-quarters front. Beside that was another sketch, of a seated girl, full length, and she likewise was, as Daniel said, naked. His senses seemed to whirl, and he choked so that he actually coughed. He did not know where to look, but quickly he shifted his eyes.

“Here are some more,” she added, going over to the piano, and bringing five other studies. These she

placed in his hands, and Daniel, looking down at them, found himself confused beyond measure, as they were all of the same unconscionable sort of subject, standing, seated, or reclining, in utter disregard of their garblessness.

The boy's first thought was, oddly enough, of the Reverend Mr. Holcomb. There was frank terror in his eyes, which were staring, and he did not know what was expected of him. Such things had never come in his way. The nearest approach to them were some postal cards one of the carpenters had shown him once, brought back from France after the war. Those were disgusting things, surreptitiously slipped from a pocket behind a pile of lumber, leafed over for a moment in a shamed-faced way, and then shoved back into their native darkness again; after which he and the carpenter had never been quite at ease together. And now...

"I don't suppose you've ever seen any studies like these before, have you!" she asked him quietly.

"No ma'am," he answered through dried lips, with eyes like those of a frightened dog.

She sensed what was going on in the young rustic's mind, and did not for the moment try to get him to look at her.

"But Daniel," she said, spreading the sketches once more on top of the piano, leaning them against the wall, "the human body is the most beautiful thing in all the world. And we artists know it, and we love to paint it."

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He was silent, hurt, uneasy. He was thinking of the Holy Roller preacher.

"Don't you think the body is beautiful?" she urged. "Don't you think your body is beautiful, for instance?"

The boy was miserable. It was almost as though she had him standing there before her, stripped and

ashamed. It was like a hideous nightmare. He felt that surely he must be dreaming. And would wake in a moment and find it all untrue.

Mrs. Delacourt laughed and fluttered near him.

“Daniel, you’re adorable! Don’t be so serious. I’m... I’m old enough to be your mother. And I’m educating you, dearest.”

Daniel smiled then, slightly, and once more the color rose in his cheeks. Quickly she stooped and an arm went impulsively about his shoulders.

The boy caught hold of her other hand, and there were tears in his eyes. She sat on the arm of his chair, half facing him. He wiped away the tell-tale dampness with his other hand, and now for the first time he looked up at her timidly. Then quickly he turned away his eyes.

“Why must you go away?” he asked.

“Let’s not talk about that now,” she replied. “I want to straighten out this other thing a little bit, first. Sweetheart, I don’t want you to grow up like most of the people around here, common and ordinary and limited. For most of these men and women, there is no world outside, nothing beyond the

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horizon of these little hills, which are pretty, and still are only the Ozarks, after all. You mustn’t get the idea that what these people are thinking is all that there is in the world. Will you!”

She paused, but there was no answer.

“These nasty-minded creatures are ashamed of their bodies.”

Daniel winced, and he wished to withdraw his hand from hers. He was hot and uncomfortable. Lightly then she swung from her seat, and went back toward her easel.

“I’m wasting precious moments. We can talk just as well while I’m painting. And the light will be going in no time.”

Daniel had hardly a word for the next half-hour, but she talked on, dwelling on this subject which seemed somehow to grip her for the moment. Chicago and Washington and New York, and still more, Paris and Florence and Rome were cited as instances of what the more civilized centres thought of the nude. The panic gradually grew less marked in the boy’s mind, and finally he was shaping timid questions. Already he was beginning to look back on his own attitude of an hour ago as belonging to the state of mind of a poor untutored native. A slight feeling of superiority was coming upon him. Think of the dear warm sense of secrecy he would bear back with him into his own home, knowing things of which he would not dare to breathe a syllable, although they were the sort of things which cultured

people all over Europe and America, according to his beloved Lady, were constantly considering. He pictured to himself a society in these high worlds, in New York, for instance, talking in elevated philosophical seriousness of the beauty of the human body, walking about daily in the presence of exposures which to local minds would be unthinkable. As yet he

was not altogether at his ease. He tried to look steadily at the sketches on the mantelpiece without flinching. But he could not quite do it.

The end of today's painting time was imminent. Dusk was coming quickly into the room, and an habituated eye would have seen that Mrs. Delacourt was putting on the last touches, rounding out the sketch here and there to its final form.

"I'm wondering," she said quizzically, as she considered her handiwork, "whether I ought to show you what I've been doing." There was a suggestion of nervousness, now that the moment was approaching when Daniel should see his portrait.

"Of course," she continued, trying to seem as matter-of-fact as possible, "I've only used your head as model. I had a figure already on the canvas before you came up. I did it from fancy this week. You won't mind, will you!" She smiled at him.

He came round and faced the easel. There, gazing out at him, was himself, nude. The figure was seated in a glowing interior, seemingly resting against a background of crimson curtains, unlike anything Daniel had ever seen, except for the dressing

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gown behind his chair. The boy's hands were caught round his knee, as he had happened to sit for a while this afternoon himself. The picture was not, as he quickly rejoiced within him, actually indecent; but the *idea* of it was overwhelming to him.

"What do you think of it?" demanded Mrs. Delacourt casually, as she washed her brushes. "I'm

going to tone down the lower part of the background somewhat. Let's see how it looks in a frame."

In a daze he waited while she quickly divested a landscape of its dark wood frame, and fitted the border to the newly achieved picture on the easel.

"I don't know. I think it's very nice the way it is," she continued critically. The impersonal tone of her voice made Daniel suddenly feel that he was far outside her thought. Almost it seemed to him that she had taken from him something, and now no longer was interested in the boy himself.

"Daniel, why don't you tell me what you think of it? Be frank. I can stand it." She laughed and, for the first time since the revelation, looked at him.

"I don't know what to say," he said finally, and the little nervous smile that flickered about his mouth brought her quickly over to his side impulsively. Then quickly he was serious, and she did not touch him.

"I didn't know..." he began, with a waver in his voice.

"Oh, now, listen!" she said. "Remember, dear boy, that I am old enough to be your mother. I love

you very, very dearly, and, loving you, I love all of you." She paused. "To me, since I do love you so dearly, as a mother might love a son... I've told you, I think maybe you really are my son, you know... you are very beautiful to me. And to an artist nothing is more beautiful, as I said before, than the body. It was out of the question, I suppose... just yet... for you to pose for me... this way. And so... I wanted a picture

of you to take along with me for the winter. And now I've got it!"

She had said all this in a steady stream. Still the boy made no reply. The expression on his face was a riddle to her.

"Nobody's going to see it, you know," she added. "This is going to be my own secret, with you, dear heart. Now, aren't you flattered?"

The boy still seemed dazed. On nearly every one of his Sunday afternoon visits with this woman, somehow he suddenly felt awkward and ill at ease. He rushed to see her again, each week, eager for the quickening encounter with her spirit, so much richer than his. Every time, he came away almost in a fright. In the course of the week this feeling was purged from him, and once more he sprang up the hill on Sunday, desirous of nothing so much as a talk with her. On her side, the week was a piling up, too, of the desire to see the boy, to have him with her, to talk with him, and have him feed full the hunger she felt within her. The actuality was tantalizing, dissatisfying. And yet he was dear to her. She was

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changing him, she was having an effect upon him, the richening, broadening experience which she was giving to him was at times a deep gratification to her spirit, and she told herself that she was happy. Books and music and the arts lay still ahead. Oh, she could give him such things I And yet, at the end of each of his stays with her, as today, she felt herself half sick with frustration, weary with hopelessness, desperate

over the very youth in him that made him so dear to her.

“Kiss me good-bye, dear,” she said finally, after he had silently got into his shoes, and stood ready to plunge out into the rain. “I’m going this week, you know, and you won’t see me for months.” “Well, good-bye,” he said and he could hardly look at her. She clung to him for a moment, but the lips he laid for the briefest time on hers were limp and spiritless.

“Now, be a good son,” she said, trailing her hand down over his shoulder. And she pushed him out the door. Then she went in and threw herself down in a deep easy chair, with the framed crimson picture on its easel before her. There she sat until it was quite dark, and she felt chill.

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BY the following spring, a startling change had come over the centaur. He had lost his baby-character, his boyishness, and had taken on pretty much the appearance which since then has distinguished him. His horse-body had not yet taken on anything like its full growth, although it had fairly reached a stage which enabled him to do much more work than had hitherto been the case, while still incapable of his full complement of physical exertion. His legs were still somewhat slender for his length, thereby pronouncing for coltishness, and his barrel did not yet give that feeling of solid structure which in man and beast alike, is one of the signs of unmistakable maturity.

To our eyes, naturally more subtle in distinguishing human differences than in tracing the various features of individual animals, the changes, however, would have been most apparent in the upper torso and the head of the creature. His body had taken on a robust stolidity and firmness of muscle that was splendid to see. The curling soft mane down his spinal column was more luxuriant than when we last saw it, and seemed to have taken on a rich dignity of glossy smooth movement which was carried on down to the horse's back by the continuation of what

might "be called his more natural mane, where it was longer. His short neck appeared yet more squat than

before, and his round head seemed to have grown still more rounded. His curling black hair, which he now brushed daily with a discarded old scrub-brush picked up in the yard, was an orderly mass of tight-curling ringlets, which clung to his fingers like grape tendrils when he ran his hands through their depths. From his rather low forehead, on each side the hair grew close down on his temples, and then swung down in front of his ears to the curve of his jaw, whence it followed the swing of the line of his chin, leaving a fair field of rich color quite free on each cheek. His dark moustache was already forming, over a mouth that had grown fuller and redder as the winter proceeded, in vivid contrast with most of the Durnans, who had waxed more and more peaked and pale during the cold winter. The eyes of the centaur were now of a piercing black, and had a primitive wildness about them that reminded one of Chaucer's Monk:

"His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed." His thick black eyebrows were now clearly joined together, lending a somewhat heavy look to his whole physiognomy.

During the winter, he had been increasingly employed about the place, driving up the cows from the lower pasture, rounding up the horses, and making himself generally useful in matters where usually a boy on horseback had been needed. He still limped

slightly from the effect of the shot in that hind hoof, and with changes in the weather he suffered some slight aching pains there.

Once or twice, it may he mentioned, Mr. Durnan noticed that when he sent the animal down for the horses, to be harnessed for work, the centaur brought up all of them except a young mare, eighteen months old, whom Dick declared that he could not find. Subsequent search had on each occasion found her in a not inconspicuous place, and angry chiding of the centaur brought forth only a sullen moodiness. It became increasingly evident that he had lied when he said she was not to be found. The true explanation lay, of course, in the fact that he had experienced a growing tenderness for the creature, and had sought to shield her thus from heavy labor. He himself would hardly have acknowledged that this was true, and indeed would have been hard put to it to explain even to himself why he had thus favored the creature.

For he was also tending more and more to identify himself, in so far as it was possible, with the members of the Durnan family and with human beings in general. Habitually now he wore the leather strap about his waist, and he loved to hang his thumbs in this as he stood talking or as he walked across the barn-yard. The quiet way in which he indicated that Belle no longer existed for him was a study in itself, and indeed, as is the way with animal mothers, she herself seemed to have forgotten her relationship

with the strange creature. They walked, in general, as things utterly apart.

One Monday night the family wash was left out on the line, not having quite dried, and the next morning it

was found that one of Ben's shirts had disappeared. When the centaur showed up with the cows for the morning milking, he was rather self-conscious, for he was arrayed in the stolen blue garment. It had cost him much struggle to conquer the unruly shirt, both in its abstraction from the grip of the clothes-pins, and in its donning, with its complication of sleeves and neck opening. In the light of the stars it looked several times as though he would be utterly baffled by its complexities. Even now he had the thing on wrong-side-out, with its pockets next his flesh and its buttons facing inward. It was open at wrist and neck. The shirt-tails hung grotesquely. He had not thought even to tuck them inside his belt. There was much ribald laughter, besides the angry expostulations of Ben and his parents. Sympathy for his suffering from the cold was momentarily aroused until it was pointed out that even in the cold air of the early March morning the centaur was not shivering, and seemed, as a matter of fact, to be even too warm in his denim shirt. The garment was not taken from him. It had been polluted anyway, in the eyes of the Durnans, by its having been worn by an animal. Ben would no more have donned that shirt now than if it had once been worn by a Negro. The taint of its degradation was

indelibly stamped upon it, as though it had been an ineradicable fetid odor. Henceforth the centaur went clothed.

At least during the day he strove to assimilate himself to the ways of man, and then rarely could be

seen associating with the rest of the horses. Along the road one day he found an abandoned old coat. He was delighted with the find, and promptly added that to his costume. One pocket yawned drooping from a hopeless rent, and both elbows were frayed. The color, from all standards of sophistication, was hopeless, although a painter would have rejoiced in its weathered richness. Arrayed in this, he liked to imagine that sometimes the chance passer-by would not see that he was different from other people. Standing behind a rick of wood or peering over the backs of other animals, he would fold his arms, and hope the people whirling by would think him only a boy standing on a box. And, sometimes, as a matter of fact, unobservant men and women would actually so interpret his height as they dashed past. Usually, however, although seeing only his upper torso, clad as it was in garments almost normal, they looked, and looked again. And indeed, the creature's head was a sight to look at twice, for its very vitality and high coloring if for nothing else.

But at night he would generally take off his clothes, and stow them away in some corner of the barn, rolled up for safety, and then he would scratch his shoulders, and rejoice in his freedom from the

irksome covering. He would lie down and roll, and against the door post rub off the itching sensation of the coat and shirt. It was a real relief to him to be rid of the integuments; it seemed to him that new life came into him when he had thus taken on his primal

nakedness once more. The nocturnal habits of his equine forebears thus far dominated him, that he felt equally wakeful by night and by day. A few hours of sleep snatched, as it were, on the hoof, a moment of drowsing now and then in some sunny corner or in the earlier hours of the night, seemed to suffice him, and the rest of the time he wandered about, at his work in the day time or looking for adventure after dark.

Since gates were now no longer a mystery to him, his wanderings went wide over the hills in the vicinity, and 'more than once, in the grim hours of the darkest early morning, he invaded the town, and prowled about its deserted streets. Once the night watchman up on the Square fired at him as he was peering eagerly into the dark window of a men's furnishing shop, dimly illumined by the wan light of an old moon. The centaur fled precipitously from that awful town, reminiscent for him of the rainy evening in the Fair grounds. Wild-eyed he dashed down to the corner and darted down the first alley towards the sloping road that led home. After that he stayed more closely in the country. All the roads and pastures for miles around became known to him. He had early learned the necessity of closing a gate

after he had passed through it, if he was not to bring down wrath upon his head and start an inquiry that would place the guilt upon him. Consequently, many a distant farm house was visited during this period by the lonely wanderer, and was never the "wiser for the experience. Dogs troubled him, to be sure, with their

echoing tumult, and so he was shut out from coming close to many of the haunts of men, which so fascinated him. It seemed to him now that no sight was more beautiful on earth than a light in a window, shining warm and cheery across the twilight. But also there was no more lonely sight for him, shut out as he was, forever seemingly, from the converse of men. Melancholy was often in his features nowadays, and sometimes this hardened even into a sort of grim ferocity.

Daniel was the only human being who seemed willing to talk with the creature, and even he was more preoccupied with his own problems than with the situation of the centaur. His combined labors of the high school work and the building had left him but little time for talk of any kind at home. He came to the house at night dead tired, and was off early in the morning. Sundays he would sometimes go away into some warm sunny spot down in the lower pasture, or, if it were raining, he would, with a book, slink into the barn and ensconce himself in the hayloft, there to read and to day-dream in peace by the dusty light from one high window, in silence except for the squeaks and jibberings of the multitudinous

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mice as they rustled and scurried about their affairs. Little flurries of wind made their way through the cracks of the plank walls of the place, but the winter was a mild one, and Daniel was inured to worse hardships than these.

Of letters he had four or five during the course of the winter, the first he had ever received. They were postmarked from St. Louis, and were discreet and loving in a motherly way, although here and there a daring cryptic reference was slipped in, which the boy, blushing, comprehended, although nobody else would have known to what the woman was referring. She spoke, for instance, in every one of her letters, of a certain painting that was very dear to her, which nobody else on earth except himself and herself had ever laid eyes on.

On his birthday, in December, and on Christmas, had come books. The first was a thick affair, formidable with its paragraphs of solid printing, without illustrations. It was called "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel." After one brief effort to tackle the reading of this work, Daniel gave it up in despair and hid it in one corner of the loft. I am sorry to say that the domestic life of a family of young mice was made cosier by its pages shredded into nest material before Daniel found the outrage. Then his conscience hurt him terribly. The other book, sent at Christmas, was even worse in one way, although in this case there was very little printing and the book consisted almost entirely of pictures.

It was entitled "Greek and Roman Sculpture," and had one plate after another which seemed simply incredible to the unaccustomed eyes of Daniel. Strange they all seemed to him at first, and he felt that he could never get over the initial fact that they wore either no clothes

at all or else garments which struck him as loose and inadequate, singularly unadapted to cold or windy weather. "Wouldn't you think they'd freeze to death," he remarked to himself under his breath. After a while he found himself returning again and again to certain figures in the book, which haunted him, he did not know why, with a feeling of glory and distinction, although he could not have given these names to the emotions.

The arrival of the books did not go unnoted in the Durnan household, where mail of any kind was a rarity. Daniel was noncommittal on the subject.

"It's that damned Delacourt woman up on the hill, that's what it is," said Mr. Durnan to his wife that night. "She's up in St. Louis now."

"What's she a-sendin' books to Dan for, do you reckon?" demanded his wife.

"I'd like to wring her dirty neck for her! Teachin' the boy infidel stuff."

Next day Mrs. Durnan tackled Daniel when they were alone in the kitchen.

"Daniel, what was them books you got from St. Louis?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing," replied the boy with the irritation

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of all young males towards their parents, "just some books."

"Who sent 'em to you?"

"Oh, I don't want to talk about them."

"Well, I know who sent 'em to you," broke forth Mrs. Durnan indignantly. "That Delacourt woman,

that's who it was. And she's got a lot to do to be a-sendin' books to a young boy the likes of you. And you're headed straight for perdition, young man, let me tell you that. I don't know why I was ever cursed with such a punishment like this, I swear I don't, havin' such a kid on my hands!" Mrs. Durnan was crying now, as she washed the dishes.

Daniel said nothing more, but left the house, miserable.

There was one illustration in the book, however, which did not offend the boy's sensibilities, and which did mightily interest him. It showed a creature not unlike their own centaur... their own centaur grown mature. Surely it had the same strange combination of man's body and horse's body, although the legs were proportionately still more slender than those of the Durnan creature; and also it had a beard. Seated on its back was a naked baby with wings, and supporting the sturdy barrel of the horse was a truncated stem, something like a big pineapple. This somewhat marred the general effect for Daniel, but nevertheless the statue gave him pause.

To Mr. Carr, as being the wisest person he knew,

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the boy carried his book finally, one Saturday, and showed the picture of the centaur.

"Mr. Carr," he said, "do you suppose there ever really were animals like this in olden times?"

Mr. Carr spread apart the curtains of his moustaches and solemnly gazed at the opened book before him.

Then he deliberately went through the rite of putting on his gold-rimmed spectacles before he answered.

“Do you remember, one day, that I revealed to you the signs of the zodiac and their interpretation in the cosmic history of the world?” he asked sententiously.

Daniel nodded.

“Before the age of Christ, which is the dispensation which we are now just leaving,” went on Mr. Carr solemnly, not looking at the boy, “there was an age variously dominated by Cancer, the crab... you will perhaps remember that the ancients numbered their years backwards, so that we refer today to such and such a year B.C.; and by Gemini, the twins, representing Romulus and Remus, or in other words Rome, the dominating city of olden times; and by Capricorn, or the goat... and I shall not digress on the goatishness or the lasciviousness of ancient times, according to all records; and by Saggitarius, who was a figure like this one here represented.”

Mr. Carr lowered his eyes from their elevation, as though the oracle had now finished speaking.

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“But do you suppose there ever were such creatures as these?” insisted Daniel.

Mr. Carr fondled one long handful of whiskers.

“I have no doubt whatever,” he replied slowly, “and less doubt now than ever, since I see this ancient figure in your book, which seems to be a photograph, that there actually were such creatures.”

“This is only a stone statue, you know, of course,” added Daniel, with a doubt.

The man looked critically at the picture once more, without speaking.

“Even so,” he decided with priestly solemnity, “where else would its maker have gained the idea?”

Daniel wanted to say more to Mr. Carr, but somehow felt a hesitancy. He would sound oddly presumptuous declaring to the man that at this very moment he, Daniel, had such a creature out at his house one mile west of Roosevelt. He never had mentioned the fact to his friend, and now to do so would look like boasting. All morning he followed the man about in silence, trying to pluck up sufficient courage to tell him.

“Mr. Carr,” he did finally manage to say, along towards noon, “we’ve got... out at our house, you know... we’ve got one of those... those centaurs we were speaking about this morning.”

The noon whistle blew from the Mill and from the ice-plant, and the bell on the Courthouse added its testimony of the hour. With dignity Mr. Carr laid

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down his implements, removed his spectacles, and reached to the untying of the backward knot of his apron, which he always removed while eating.

“Just one moment, my boy,” he said, as he went to get his lunch box. When he returned, the two of them sat together in the unfinished house, in a warm spot of sunlight sheltered from the wind. Spring was here, but the winter had not quite relinquished up its grip.

Daniel told his tale then, and Mr. Carr asked wise questions, but seemed more to marvel than show

surprise. Solemnly he consumed his nuts and his raisins, his whole wheat bread and his peanut butter, his dates and his apple... Mr. Carr was a vegetarian... while the facts were spread before him.

“We are on the eve of some great manifestation, Daniel,” he said, raising an admonitory finger. “This is sent as a sign and a symbol. You are blessed above most men. Have many people seen this creature? Are they not struck with its marvel?”

“He was in a sideshow at the Fair,” replied Daniel apologetically, “but ‘didn’t seem to make much of a go of it.”

“In a sideshow!” ruminated Mr. Carr sadly, shaking his head. “That is just like us. The multitudes nowadays, Daniel, are stricken with blindness. Here we have, in all likelihood, a gesture of the very hand of God before our eyes... and we put that gesture into a sideshow... and then neglect it...”

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and for lesser things.” The man consoled himself with his whiskers, withdrawn in their cryptic comfort. “Might I... might I see this creature?”

“Yes, of course,” replied Daniel. “Why don’t you come out tomorrow afternoon?” “I shall do so indeed,” answered Mr. Carr, rising as the whistles once more called out, and the town clock near by struck one.

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That night there was a warm south wind, on a sudden impulse of the weather to be decent, and

Daniel took a lantern and his book of ancient sculpture and went out to look for the centaur. The animal had early learned that it was better not to disappear from the yard too early, else he would rouse suspicion of his absence, perhaps leading to measures of restraint that would prevent his getting away at all. He was increasingly attached to his nightly liberty, and growing ever more chary of revealing his nocturnal escapades. So it was that Daniel easily found the creature, standing aloof from the other animals, humming to himself.

“Come on down with me, I got something I want to show you,” said the boy, leading the way towards the gate and the lower pasture. Without a word the centaur followed along, limping slightly, and closing the gates behind their passage. Finally when they had reached the far corner among the trees,

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Daniel stopped and lit the lantern, and perched himself on a fence rail, where he was fairly sheltered from the breeze. His head was on a level with that of the centaur.

“What do you think of that?” said the boy, holding the book for the creature to see. It was opened at the picture of the classic figure in the Louvre, “Centaur and Eros.”

The centaur gazed at the page with eyes that took on no gleam of enlightenment.

“What is it?” he asked, lifting a dull face towards Daniel.

“Why, can’t you see, it’s a... a centaur, like you! It’s an old statue, you know.”

The words bore no meaning, apparently, for the animal.

“What’s those black things?” he asked, pointing with a thick forefinger.

“That isn’t anything,” said Daniel, a little out of patience. “That’s just the wall in back of him. But don’t you see he’s got a horse’s body, just like you, with a man’s body on top of it? And then there’s some sort of a baby angel on his back. But we needn’t worry about that. Look!”

With his thumb he blotted out the figure of the diminutive cupid astride the back of the centaur. The animal beside the boy leaned over to gaze once more with unseeing eyes on the printed picture before him. The light from the lantern fell full on his

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heavy features, and Daniel noticed the thick downy black beard that was beginning to manifest itself on the creature’s chin.

“Oh, an’ is this his leg?” suddenly asked the centaur, with a flash of understanding in his eye.

“Sure it is!” replied Daniel. “And there’s his other front leg, as though he was pawing. See?”

The centaur nodded with pleasure and Daniel went on.

“And these are his two hind legs... one of them is sort of behind this tree stump. That’s to hold his body up, you see.”

“What’d he need something to hold his body up for?” demanded the centaur, now all interest. “And that’s his arm, ain’t it! Only he ain’t got no hand.”

“No, he’s just got his arm bent round behind him, that’s all. Look, like this. Hold this a minute.” He forced the lantern into one hand of the creature, and then bent back the animal’s other arm into an approximation of the carved figure’s posture. “See?”

The centaur nodded eagerly, and then gave back the lantern.

“Gee,” laughed the creature, “he needs a haircut, don’t he! And look at his beard! Looks like Grandpa Dinwiddie! What’s he got the prop under his belly for, though? He must o’ been awful weak, with just a kid like that on his back!”

Daniel explained that this was a statue, carved in stone, not a real animal, living and moving about.

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The explanation did not carry much meaning to the centaur, he it confessed, who continued to look with a certain scorn on the weak-backed creature depicted in the book.

“He *must* o’ been a weak one!” he said, turning aside to spit in disgust. “Got any more in there?” he demanded. “I like them things.”

In modesty the boy held up the book out of reach of the centaur’s eyes, as he leafed over the pages. Finally he showed him one of the more completely clad figures in the illustrations, a statue named Artemis, he did not know why.

There came a brief moment of incomprehension, and then the centaur burst into a shout of laughter.

“Keep still,” commanded Daniel, looking hurriedly up towards the house, and closing the book. “What are you laughing at, anyway?”

“Why, at the funny clothes she’s got on!” sniggered the centaur. “Let me see it again.”

This time he controlled his amusement, and bent his laughing eyes over the page.

“Gee, ain’t all them things hangin’ on her in a funny way, though! An’ she’s barefooted, too, a grown-up lady like her!”

“Why, didn’t everybody use to go round that way?” demanded the boy, remembering the talks he had had the previous year with the centaur, about his memories.

“Huhn?” asked the animal, looking up dully.

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“Didn’t everybody used to go round in that sort of clothes?” Daniel repeated. “You know... ‘the other time,’ the way you used to say.”

“What other time?” reiterated the centaur stupidly.

“Why, don’t you remember, how you used to tell me about ‘the other time,’ and what you used to do and the way you used to talk, and the things you remembered from... well, from ‘the other time’?”

“Shucks!” said the centaur, and he spat. “I’m too old for all that monkey business now. I forgotten all about it already.”

“Don’t you ever hear the man playing on the set of whistles any more?” asked Daniel, somewhat wistfully.

“Hell, no!”

“Or nearly see those girls that laugh over there in the trees when the moon’s shining?”

The centaur made a derisive sound.

“Doesn’t the horse with the one horn ever chase you any more?” Daniel himself smiled as he asked this question.

“Like to see him try it!” sniffed the animal scornfully. “That’s all I got to say.”

“And don’t you ever say any of that... that poetry, any more?” asked the boy after a while.

“Naw!” blared out the centaur in disgust. “That’s old stuff, that is! The little old U. S. A. is good enough for me, any day!” Now, to be quite frank, the centaur did not know exactly what these words meant, but he had heard them one night recently

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on the porch of the red store at the corner, as he hung about the crowd there, and their speaking had seemed to bring a certain silent respect upon the man who said them. Daniel made no direct reply, and the centaur was satisfied with the result.

“Well, what *do* you think about, nowadays, then?” said the boy. For a long time he had not had a talk with the creature, and he felt himself out of contact with the animal’s development.

“I’d like...” began the centaur slowly, “I’ll tell you. I’d like to run in the races next year at the Fair, that’s what I’d like to do. Like I done last year, you remember, only then, o ’ course, I was only a kid an’ couldn’t run, an’ I wasn’t entered proper nohow. But

I'm gettin' a wind now that nothin' can't break. I'm trainin'. Ever night I do a workout all along the roads... don't you tell your old man, will you! He'd lam hell out o' me if he knowed it. Sometimes I race with autos goin' along the roadway, an' go along behind 'em, you know, without them seein' me. An' I'm gettin' so's I can keep up with Fords right smart. I'd beat 'em if it wasn't for this here bum hoof o' mine.

"An' then," he added after a moment's silence, "I'm inventin' somethin'."

"Inventing something! What you inventing?" said the surprised Daniel.

"Well, I tell you," replied the centaur, preparing for explanation. "Only, you mustn't say nothin' to nobody about it, will you!"

Daniel nodded.

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"I'm inventin'..." the centaur began, and then halted, with unconscious skill in suspense, "I'm inventin' a way that I can go up town an' ever'body won't be lookin' at me all the time. See?"

He expected a nod, and Daniel gratified him.

"First time I went up, with your old man, it was somethin' awful. I didn't have no clothes on, an' didn't know no better." He chuckled. "An' the folks crowded round, something fit to kill. We didn't stay long that time, I tell you!

"Then the next time, I run off an' went up all by my lonely. That time, I had on my shirt an' my coat, you know, an' the cop couldn't say nothin' to me. But

shucks, the people just crowded round, somethin' fierce, an' I didn't get no pleasure out of it at all, an' I turned round and come back.

"An' then, comin' down the Hospital hill, I got my idea for my invention. It sure is slick, too! Listen! I seen something comin' up the hill, what I thought first was another... well, another person like me. See? An' I got a start something awful. An' when he come along... it was kind o' half dark, don't you know the way it gets... why, I seen it was only a man ridin' on a mare. An' I says to myself, I says, 'Say, there's a idea!' See? An' that's how I got my invention."

"Well, what is it?" demanded Daniel, when he realized that the centaur considered the tale finished.

"Why, you boob!" came the rejoinder. "I'm goin' to get a old pair o' pants an' a old pair o' boots, an'

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hang 'em across just like legs bangin' down from under my coat on each side. See? An' then I'm goin' to get some kind o' horse's head an' fasten it out in front. An' people'll think it's just a man ridin' on a horse. See? An' then they won't look no more."

Daniel considered.

"Where're you going to get the horse's head?" he demanded, in a tone something judicial.

"Pooh!" sneered the centaur, with a wave of his hand. "That ain't what's worryin' me now. That'll come later. What's botherin' me is where I'm goin' to get holt o' them pants an' lay my hands on a old pair o' boots. That's what stumps me. I ain't even goin' to

think about the horse's head till I get this here thing settled."

The boy smiled as he blew out his lantern and hopped down from his perch.

"We all have our worries in this world, don't we!" he commented.

"Did you ever invent anything?" asked the centaur, as he went up the slope with Daniel. He spoke as if from the heights of experience, stooping to converse with a tyro. "You ought to try your hand at it. It's a lot of fun."

"No, I never did," replied the boy.

"Well, if you ever do," continued the animal, closing the second gate behind them, "I'll be glad to help you all I can."

"Thanks. Good night," said Daniel.

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"So long," waved the centaur, serious with his creative occupation. Slowly then he wandered over towards the barn, humming, with his hands clasped behind his back.

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Since it was Saturday night, Mr. Durnan and all his elder offspring had gone in to town, to linger among the conglomerate crowds of moiling people on the sidewalks of the Square, as was their weekly wont. In the dusk about seven o'clock, every country road leading into Roosevelt was marked with this Saturday evening pilgrimage. Girls decked in their city finery;

youths shaven and shorn into an approximation of metropolitan smartness; whole families riding in springless wagons, with cane-bottomed chairs to eke out accommodations; hill-billies with wide black hats peaked in the crown, or else wearing discarded Army coats which never fitted them, riding horseback in a strange lop-sided sort of way that here prevails, sitting not square in the saddle; a silent seepage into town it was for the most part, seeking a couple of hours of forgetfulness, to stand in front of the brightly lighted movie palaces; which they but rarely thought of invading, on account of the cost. Then out again, purposeless except for the vague looking forward to a repetition of this evening's occupation a week hence. The work days were looped from Saturday to Saturday. These blank stretches of vain hours at the week end were the

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flowering of their work, the thing for which they lived.

Daniel had the house practically to himself, and he settled down beside the table with his book. His mother was already in her bed, as were the youngest of the children. The boy sat in what might be called one of the dining-room chairs, although it was devoted at various times to all the services of the household, a peripatetic piece of furniture. The original bottom of the worn structure having vanished, a seat had cleverly been fashioned of a length of rope, woven from side to side and front to back, not without both beauty and comfort. It was one of the few fairly intact chairs in the house. The table was covered with worn oilcloth,

much marked with the cuts of knives, rings from plates and cups, and spots of spilled liquids, and at the corners showing the bare fabric through its shining outward hide. Near the edge of the table stood the lamp, an affair of glass, pressed into ridges and creases almost impossible to clean. Accretions of black sediment stood out like a pattern against the yellow liquid within the bowl of the lamp, illumined from the light above. There was no shade on the lamp; as a consequence the steady flame shone out brutally straight into the face of the beholder. It was like an eye unprotected by eyelashes.

Daniel conned first of all, once again, the front fly-leaf of the book, where, in a slanting pointed hand was written: "To Daniel Durnan, from one

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who dearly loves him, L. B. D. Christmas, 1924. St. Louis." Then down in the lower left-hand corner was written: "In memory of the first portrait." Daniel turned over the page quickly in a deprecatory way. Then he plunged forthwith into a reconsideration of the illustrations.

An hour and a half later, his father coming into the room found the boy slouched down in his chair, breathing heavily, with head pitched forward over his book, asleep. Anger flared up in the man, a composite anger framed of many elements. He was furious, first of all, because of the needless use of oil; then he hated this godless business of education, which only took his children away from him for many months during the year, when they might be better occupied at some real

work; particularly he hated it in Daniel, who seemed bent on going on with the matter, even to the extent of that infidel University up on the hill yonder, that made the taxes so high; and now here he was, pretending to be so smart and all that, lording it over the rest of the family... and as sound asleep over his book as Mr. Durnan himself would have been. A fine scorn waxed in the breast of the parent as he took in the scene. He strode over and grasped the book lying negligently under the boy's hand, which represented for him the epitome of all the outrage in the affair.

Daniel, stirring, saw his father's mouth hang open and his eyes stare fixedly, as he flipped over the pages in the open book. One picture after another

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met the man's eyes, an incredible iteration, seemingly, of the single fact that human beings are separable from their clothes.

"Well I'll be..." ejaculated the older man to himself, and it was joy that thus expressed itself in his words. Then he raised his head and found himself gazing into the eyes of his son.

"Where'd you git holt o' this here book?" demanded the man, and now joy was dead in his tone.

This was one thing which Daniel was not going to tell, let come what would. He kept silence.

"Where'd you git holt o' this here book? You answer me, when I ast you."

Still the boy sat silent, knowing the sheer hopelessness of his position.

Mr. Durnan made a definite gesture then, taking up the book firmly in his two hands, and, before the boy could jump up, ripping it into two segments, down the back. Daniel leapt up with a cry, and his father backed off from him.

“I’ll learn you!” said the man fiercely.

“Don’t! Don’t” cried Daniel, striving to lay hands on his father’s ripping fingers.

“I’ll learn you!” Mr. Durnan repeated, and turned towards the cooking stove, just outside in the diminutive kitchen. With a clangor he dropped the door by which the stove was fed, and tore out a section of the pages. These he rolled and thrust into the aperture. The coals were dead, and he fumbled in one vest pocket for a match.

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“You...” gasped the boy and then halted. He wanted to say “you hog!” and the word would not shape itself. Even in this extremity, the man was his father, ridiculous as it might seem, and even now, ridiculous as that too might seem, the boy felt a loyalty to the man. Suddenly, although he could see now the pages of his gift in hot and hasty flames inside the grate, and hear the draught roaring as the Greek gods and goddesses perished up the flue, he found that he was almost more disgusted with himself for what he felt to be his unnatural feelings of revulsion against his own father, than he was with the man himself for his crass destruction of the book.

Section after section went the way of the first pages, and then the back cover was cracked and

shoved into the flames. As Mr. Durnan bent the final fragment in his hands, he noticed the writing inside the cover. He was not a man given to the ready deciphering of script, nor did he on the present occasion leap to the undertaking. He bent a wary eye upon the bit of inscription, ready to retreat and imply that it was of no consequence, in case the task proved impracticable.

*To Daniel Durnan was easy... dearly loves him...
Christmas 1924... St. Louis....*

“Did that dam Delacourt woman give you this here filthy low-down infidel book?” raged Mr. Durnan in a tone louder than before. “I’ll wring her dirty neck for her, that’s what I’ll do!”

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The sound of creaking bed-springs came out from the front room, and then the form of Mrs. Durnan, aroused from her slumbers, appeared in the doorway. Her scant wisp of hair was coiled in a tight knot at the back of her head, and her body was arrayed in a thin nightgown, beneath which were exposed her cold feet.

“What’s the matter, Jo?” she asked, blinking at the light and shading her eyes with one hand.

“You git back into bed. This ain’t no place for a woman, I’ll tell you that,” replied her husband. He cast a quick eye towards the stove. “I’m ashamed of my own flesh and blood, that’s what I am. This here boy, as thinks he’s so smart, has been carryin’ on with a married woman, that’s what he’s been doin’. He ain’t nothin’ but a dirty low godless lyin’ infidel.”

In scorn he flung the rent cover of the offending book onto the table in their midst.

"I ain't either," broke forth the boy, and he reached out his hand and took up the bit of cloth-covered cardboard with Her writing on it. Then he himself strode over and jerked open the stove door, where the blackening stiff ashes of the paper still showed here and there the glowing ghosts of half-tones and their titles. Into their midst he thrust the last vestige of his book of sculpture.

"Want to make me out a liar! Want to make your own father out a liar, huhn! Well, my young feller, I'll jest learn you better, one of these days."

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He leveled a dirty finger at the boy. "I jest want to tell you that if that filthy low-down cradle-robbin' woman up there on the hill ever shows her face about here again, she better jest watch out. That's all I got to say. I don't give a dam if she has got a Dago or a Sheeny husband. I'll Dago her. I'll Sheeny her. I'll show her a trick or two. We ain't got law and order in this country for nothin', not by a long shot. I know one organization as's still got the fear of the Lord in its heart, an' all your dam perfessors and Universities can't stop it, neither."

Daniel knew that his father was referring to the Klan, which recently had shown a recrudescence in the vicinity, and had even indulged in one or two spectacular public installations at the Fair grounds, with a huge fiery cross to impress the natives, and fireworks later. Divers sums of fifty dollars had been

bestowed in the name of the Klan upon churches and other worthy causes in the town, and this munificence had in each case been duly chronicled in the Press.

“Yes,” mused the boy aloud, “Mr. Butler, for instance.”

“Shame on you, an’ your mother here to hear you!” called out Mr. Durnan. For Mr. Butler, who had created the local branch of this moral organization, had later become a stink in the nostrils of the community, by reason of his adulterous activities brought to light. The Klan had not, on that occasion, functioned with its usual lamentable ferocity,

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but, casting the mantle of charity... and of secrecy... over the erring brother, had furnished from its exchequer the funds for his quiet withdrawal from the town.

“Ain’t you ashamed of yourself, talkin’ about such things before your own mother’s face!” reiterated Mr. Durnan.

“Well, he’s Klan!” said the boy sullenly.

“You shut up!” yelled his father, grabbing the chair beside him. “By God, you’ll be tellin’ me next you’re a nigger-lover! That’s what comes o’ your goin’ to that damd heathen Piscopal church in town. I’d like to burn the place down. An’ trottin’ round with lewd women as sends you books and such-like. They oughtn’t to allow such stuff in the mails, that’s what they oughtn’t!”

Mrs. Durnan stood quietly weeping, sniffing from time to time, and warming one foot on the other.

“Jo, you better come to bed,” she remonstrated meekly.

“You never did see such truck!” he exploded to her, still concentrating on the pictures.

Mrs. Durnan yawned and shivered. No better pacific, perhaps, could have been found. Mr. Durnan yawned vastly, in uncontrolled vehemence. And with the gesture, his wrath departed from him, like a mediæval spirit issuing from the wide portal of its body’s mouth at death.

“You go to bed,” said Mr. Durnan to both his inferiors, as he turned down the lamp for the night.

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He could hardly keep himself awake long enough to stagger in to bed. From paroxysm to paroxysm he moved in his yawning, for seven times, before he got off his coat, his shoes, and his trousers, and then tumbled in beside his spouse. He had just time to adapt his hip to the broken spring on his side of the bed before he was sound asleep.

“Hey!” came a whispered call outside the dining-room window, and Daniel saw a dim shadow beckoning in the darkness. He recognized the centaur.

Outside the kitchen door the animal was waiting for him when he issued forth.

“I had it fixed all right, anyhow,” said, the creature under his breath. “Come here and look.”

Daniel followed the centaur round the corner of the house. There, beneath the dining-room window, the animal stooped and lifted up a nondescript batch of articles, among which Daniel immediately made out

two whips from the barn, an old rawhide, and some leather straps with dangling buckles.

“I thought he was goin’ to whop you, onct there,” confided the centaur intimately,” and I ran out quick and gathered all these here together so’s he couldn’t find them. See?

“Thanks,” said Daniel, smiling in spite of himself.

“He’s used ’em on me, an’ I know what it’s like. An’ it don’t feel very good, either,” remarked the animal in the bond of common fellowship.

“Well, you’re a good kid, all right,” added Daniel.

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“Aw, shticks, it wasn’t nothin’,” replied the centaur. But that last commendatory word from the boy had been wonderful in his ears.

“I’m goin’ to bed now. Good night,” said Daniel, turning.

“So long,” answered the animal.

But as he wandered about late, the centaur was lifted up in spirit. “You’re a good kid all right,” he kept repeating to himself. “You’re a good kid all right!” Doggone it, it was worth a lot to have a thing like that said to you! “You’re a good kid all right!” Why, he’d... he’d work like a Trojan for anybody who’d say a thing like that to him. Work like a Trojan? He had heard somebody say that, day before yesterday. It almost reminded him of something, but he could not quite remember what. “You’re a good kid all right!” By George, he resolved within him that he was going to be a better... a better kid from now on. Life was good. He smiled to himself as he walked in the dark.

No more running around at night. He was going to leave the mares alone. He was going to work hard. It was worth it. For had not Daniel told him that he was “a good kid all right!”

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By May the centaur was working steadily, and had become a regular and most important item in the field force of Ben, who had now gone in for piece work with a team and a wagon, by the hour, day, or week. He was, in fact, a contractor, after a mild

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sense. The animal was still too light for draught work of the heavier sort, but he proved himself highly capable in carrying through commissions which otherwise would have required at least a horse and a boy. He was quick at carrying messages or running home for a tool left behind. A light two-wheeled cart was at first hitched on behind him, but later, by a stroke of genius, the shafts were removed from this, and the thing was transformed into a sort of glorified push-cart, which he loaded, transported, and then unloaded, as occasion demanded.

At first he was used only on country jobs, on a kind of neighborly basis, with a very low rental for his services. But as his value was more and more borne home to his owners, the price of his day's work was increased, and finally he was employed from time to time in the town itself. Inasmuch as he now went constantly with the upper part of his body clothed in

the daytime, there were no grounds for objection by the city or county officials. Gradually he became a familiar sight about the streets of Roosevelt, a common phenomenon, like the village idiot, the girl telegraph messenger, the tamale man in winter, and the President of the University at all times. Traveling men stopping overnight at the President Hotel were a little surprised sometimes at the spectacle, but seeing the natives so blandly unprovoked to wonder, they also quickly let their thoughts go back to orders and jack-pot and hooch and other high matters of routine.

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April had seen the release of Mr. Dewitt, whose term of incarceration was shortened by the attitude of uncompromising trouble-making which that gentleman had latterly adopted towards his keepers in the jail. He would not turn his hand to work, and at every meal he complained bitterly about the poor quality of the food served to him. As he himself truthfully remarked, he had not been born yesterday. And he was on to all the ways in which an inmate of a house of bondage can make himself odious and a burden to his keepers. Finally in self-defence the authorities shortened the period of Mr. Dewitt's residence in the County's house of free entertainment. An impersonal observer of the whole episode might with some show of reason have concluded that the tax-payers of the community had been the chief sufferers under the circumstances. Mr. Dewitt had taken on weight during the winter, but came out into the spring sunlight looking otherwise very fit. This town suiting him as well as any other for

the nonce, until he could once more accustom himself to the larger air of freedom, and replenish somewhat his purse and his wardrobe, Mr. Dewitt gained a position behind the counter of the Waffle House Café. Two weeks later he entered the service of the University, where his intimate acquaintance with domestic animals gained him a not uncongenial post as some sort of supervisor of feeding about the stables of the College of Agriculture.

Almost his first morning on the campus brought

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Mr. Dewitt face to face with the centaur, whom he had not seen since the unfortunate evening at the Fair grounds. The animal was shoving his pushcart, laden with planks, across one of the side lawns near the Main Building, where a rough semi-circular array of seats was in course of construction under the trees.

The centaur stopped and stared for a moment, and then a broad smile displayed his even white teeth.

“Howdy, Mr. Dewitt!” he said. “Gee, where you been?” He was patently most pleased to see once more his erstwhile patron, as he set down the prop of his wagon for a chat.

Mr. Dewitt’s features side-slipped for a moment, and then he spoke. Plans were almost visible in his eyes, as he looked at the animal and sized up his possibilities.

“What you doin’?” he demanded. “They workin’ you nowadays, pretty hard? You’ve growed.”

“Yeh, I’m helpin’ on the pageant,” replied the centaur, a bit proud of his use of the word, picked up

the day before.

“Where? Here in the University?” asked the man. “What’s a pageant?”

“Oh, some sort o’ what they call a Greek and Roman do-dad, I don’t know,” answered the animal, pulling out a dark and ancient rag from his pocket. With this he proceeded to mop his forehead, as he had seen other men do. “There’s where they’re

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goin’ to give it next week, over there under them there trees. See? A lot of ’em comes in wearin’ funny clothes. An’ they sort o’ walk round an’ then there’s some dancin’ and talkin’.”

“You goin’ to be in it, in this here pageant?” asked Mr. Dewitt, raising an eyebrow.

“Hell, no. Me and Ben an’ some other men is just puttin’ up the seats for the thing,” replied the classic animal.

“Hey!” came a voice from the distance. “Come on with them there boards.”

“There’s Ben comin’ now,” said the centaur. “Why don’t you come over and talk to him? I got to git on with this here pageant work.”

Mr. Dewitt considered.

“You trot along,” he said, “maybe I’ll be over after while.”

“Well, I’ll *walk* over,” replied the centaur with a tone of haughty reproach in his voice. “Trot over! Humph!” he ejaculated to himself, as he went. “Jest as though I was a horse! I like his nerve!”

Now the reason why Mr. Dewitt did not immediately jump at the chance once more to strike up acquaintance with a member of the Durnan family was that he had left off his connections with that household under conditions unfavorable to their good opinion of him, since he had gone away owing a board-bill, and also leaving Mr. Durnan in the lurch as concerned the contract to take the centaur off his hands for the winter at so much per week. Talk with

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Ben, and lay himself open perhaps to the persecutions of "the old man and the old woman"? He wondered. Almost he wished that he had told the animal to say nothing about his presence in town.

As he turned to pursue his way, without going over to see Ben, he came face to face with a tall stooped old gentleman, whose features were strangely familiar to him, although not of a type generally brought within his intimate ken. He had a vaguely unpleasant association with the man's memory. Although his clothes were old and no better than those on the back of Mr. Dewitt, there was something about his eyes and his graying beard that marked him a man separate and apart from Barney's world.

It was none other than Doctor Cribble, professor of Greek and Latin in the University. Evidently he too found something strangely familiar in the aspect of the younger man, something pleasantly reminiscent, which he could not, however, quite call to active memory. He smiled in an affable noncommittal manner, and approached Mr. Dewitt, holding out his hand.

“Well, how do you do? I’m very glad to see you again. Where have you been keeping yourself?” said the kindly old gentleman. He had a vague idea that the younger man had once been a student in one of his courses. He was shockingly delinquent in the matter of names, and so was nothing taken back that he could not in the present instance think of the stranger’s name.

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“I’m all right, thanks,” replied Mr. Dewitt, withdrawing his hand as soon as possible. There was going to come a showdown in a minute or so, he knew, and it was all going to be found out to be a mistake, and he did not wish to involve himself too deeply, to be let fall like a ton of brick, as he told himself.

“We haven’t been seeing much of you lately, I believe,” continued Doctor Cribble. “Where have you been hiding yourself?”

“Ha ha!” replied Mr. Dewitt facetiously, and his eye, wandering, fell on the clock tower of the Court house across the valley. Next door to that, he knew, was the place where... well, where he had been hiding himself. But he was not going to say so. “Nice weather we’re having,” he remarked casually, ducking his chin. Who the deuce was the old gink? Hell, he must break away somehow.

“You have left the University, I think?” inquired the Doctor, courteously. Who was this young man whose face held for him so pleasant a memory?

“No, I only just joined it yesterday,” replied Mr. Dewitt, growing restive under the eyes of the other.

There came a crash of falling planks from down the lawn, and both men turned to see what it meant. Then, into both their minds there flashed the truth about the other. The sight of the centaur, dumping his load from the cart, had wakened their memories into being. Now they knew!

“Why, of course!” ejaculated Doctor Cribble. “You’re the young man who exhibited that marvelous creature out at the Fair grounds! Dear, dear!

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Well, this is fortunate! Do you know, I’ve been wishing, ever since, that I might see you and talk with you about this incredible animal! Well, well!” And once more he grasped Mr. Dewitt’s hand and beamed upon him.

There was but modified joy in the eye of Mr. Dewitt, for now he distinctly remembered the elderly gentleman who had stood outside the canvas and talked over the top to the animal. A piker, that’s what he was! And what was the old gent’s game now, pretending to be so friendly?

“This is extremely fortunate,” went on the old savant. “Do you own him? He is yours?”

“No,” replied Mr. Dewitt, uneasy about his collar. Some of the bystanders were beginning to be interested in the spectacle of these two untoward conversants. There were punchings of elbows, and mutual glances, not to his taste. He would have liked to desist, and go over and poke some of their heads.

“Well, what I want to know is, did you teach him his Greek?” demanded Doctor Cribble, beautifully

ignorant of there being anybody within a thousand miles of him at the moment. His voice floated out over the air, giving a climax to the sense of amusement in more than one group of students nearby.

Mr. Dewitt's brow was wet with perspiration.

"Well, I guess I got to be goin' now," he said.

"Going?" repeated Doctor Cribble, with a gesture as if to adjust his spectacles, which were not there. "Oh, but I wish to speak with you, you see," he continued.

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Mr. Dewitt seemed bent on making good his departure.

"I was even thinking," went on the good Doctor, "that if you wished to sell, I might be inclined to purchase this miraculous creature from you. Ah, but you say that he does not belong to you."

"Oh!" replied Mr. Dewitt, nodding and now his backward motion ceased. "You was, was you?" He screwed up his left eye and loosened his hat from his head. Again it was evident that he was planning. "How much was you thinkin' of givin' for him?"

Doctor Cribble flinched under the faulty verbs, as though a bare nerve had been touched.

"Well, I must confess," was the Doctor's slow response, "I had not got so far as that in my deliberations. You see, I had never until today found you once more. I had quite given up hope."

"But about how much was you willin' to give for him?" Mr. Dewitt would like to get that point settled. He smelled a deal here. An offer from the old guy to him. An offer from him, duly diminished, to the

Durnans. Deal consummated. Net result, money in his own pocket. He pressed his point. "Just about how much, you know?"

"All, my young friend, circumstances are altered since that chimerical fancy struck me. I am not to be here at the university next year. I'm going down to the University of Florida to teach." He sighed and rubbed his hands slowly together.

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"Nice climate, Florida," commented Mr. Dewitt, his brain working rapidly. "I could bring him down there for you easy. Wouldn't cost you much, neither, you know. How much would you give for him, now?"

"You're very kind, I'm sure," remarked Doctor Cribble, and he meant it. "But I'm afraid it's out of the question."

"How would you like to talk with him?" asked Mr. Dewitt.

The old gentleman's eyes brightened, as Barney knew they would.

"Oh!" was his only reply.

"Well, listen," said the other. "You go round in back of this here building, and I'll get him there in a minute. He can't talk out here... there's too many people."

Doctor Cribble nodded, and moved away to the first thrilling assignation he had ever had in his whole life. There was color in his cheeks as he walked. He was as nervous, waiting in the hollow three-sided court behind the building, as though he had been a groom about to receive his bride. And when finally the centaur appeared round the corner of the structure,

walking beside Mr. Dewitt, Doctor Cribble trembled, and removed his hat.

“Now listen to me,” Barney had said to the centaur as they approached the spot where the Doctor awaited them. “I want you to talk some more of that there Hebrew like you know, with this old guy

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what you’re goin’ to see. Understand? I’ll make it all right for you.”

“What you mean?” demanded the animal, worrying at a splinter in one finger.

“Aw, you know, he’s the same old gent what talked with you out there at the Fair grounds. And maybe he’s goin’ to take you along to a place where it’s nice and warm all the time, an’ there’s lots o’ good things to eat, an’ ever’ thing. How’d you like that, huhn?”

“What’s his game?” demanded the centaur. It is to be feared that association with men was beginning to tell on the attitude of the creature towards life in general.

Then they rounded the final corner, and the centaur looked with lacklustre eyes on the old gentleman who stood, hat in hand, waiting to receive them.

“This is indeed a pleasure,” said Doctor Cribble, bending low with beautiful old courtesy. He held out his hand, and into it the centaur put his left hand, whereupon the Doctor laughed softly, and shook his head quizzically. “I remember distinctly our little talk out at the County Fair,” he continued, smiling, “a talk snatched under rather inauspicious circumstances, I fear, and amid conditions, I also fear,”... here the

Doctor turned and bowed smiling to Mr. Dewitt,...
“which were not altogether pleasant for our friend.”

Mr. Dewitt cleared his throat and moved one foot.
“Why don’t you talk some... some o’ that old-fashioned

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talk with him, Doctor?” Mr. Dewitt was not distinctly aware of the proper rank due to his present adversary, but gave him the Doctor’s title on the same basis as made every man in uniform a Captain and every female a young lady in his selling talks at fair grounds and other emporia. He was anxious to get on with his business arrangement.

“Ah, yes,” murmured Doctor Cribble, bending his soft gaze upon the centaur. “May I ask where you learned your Greek? It contains certain elements distinctly un-American... and for that matter, unlike any current European canon I know of.”

The animal was unaware that the Doctor was speaking to him, until Mr. Dewitt delivered a surreptitious dig in his ribs, and nodded a warning to pay attention to him.

“Ask him again,” said Barney, blinking.

“Where did you learn your Greek?” inquired the Doctor gently.

“Huhn?” was the sole reply of the centaur.

“Your Greek, you know. Where did you learn it?” the Doctor’s voice raised slightly, as though the animal were deaf.

“My Greek, what’s that?” demanded the animal, turning towards Mr. Dewitt.

“Say something to him in it,” suggested Barney confidentially, behind his hand, to Doctor Cribble. “He’s kind o’ bashful.”

“Most extraordinary,” said the Doctor, taking out

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his case and putting on his gold-rimmed spectacles. He considered for a moment, and then quoted two lines from the *Odyssey*, about being far from home and in an alien land.

The reply of the animal was evidently not what he might have expected, for immediately the centaur shot out a brief group of syllables incomprehensible to Mr. Dewitt, which sent Doctor Cribble almost reeling backwards. As he himself afterwards reported, although the words were of classical antiquity, their import was distinctly modern, not to say disrespectful, implying that he (the centaur) should worry, (evidently an ironic statement, of uncertain import, the Doctor said) he was happy where he was, so long as he... and the rest of the saying was deleted by the Doctor, who drew a veil over their ribaldry.

“Tut, tut!” was Doctor Cribble’s only immediate answer to this untoward onslaught. Then he added in Greek a quotation of some import about the language of the Gods. The centaur sniffed, and ejaculated some further cryptic syllables, ‘whereupon Doctor Cribble turned deliberately away from him and gave his further speech... in English... to Mr. Dewitt.

“I fear,” he said, sadly, “that our friend has suffered a moral deterioration since last I had the privilege of speaking with him. On that occasion he quoted most

beautifully, and most appropriately, I may add, from the eleventh book of the Iliad. Now,

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it seems that although he still employs his classic lore he is debasing it to the expression of most vulgar sentiments.”

The Doctor seemed pained, and looked away towards the horizon, as implying that this was but another of the keen disappointments with which this vale of tears is spread.

Not having, naturally, followed the trend of the conversation, Mr. Dewitt was somewhat at a loss how to proceed. He turned towards the centaur and jerked his features into a scowl.

“Why don’t you say somep’n nice for the Doctor! I would, if I could!” he said.

“I must confess,” continued Doctor Cribble, smiling wanly, “that his command of what I may call the colloquial classical vocabulary is extraordinary, most extraordinary. I have never met with anything like it.”

The note of wistful yearning in the man’s voice was not lost on Mr. Dewitt. The situation was not yet altogether hopeless. He still might consummate a bargain.

Then, around the corner appeared the irate figure of Ben Durnan, in quest of his delinquent servitor. The deserted cart had, upon investigation, been found behind a clump of bushes at an angle of the building, and now, once more, the ears of Doctor Cribble were offended by a flow of obscene vocables, this time in his native English.

Mr. Dewitt tried simultaneously to urge the instant

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departure of the professor, and the pacification of Ben. Doctor Cribble did flee up the rearward steps into the collegiate halls. Mr. Dewitt, with the salve of his practical psychology, did subdue the unruly passions in Ben's bosom.

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In May it was, too, that Mrs. Delacourt finally came back to the house on the hill, after a jaunt from St. Louis to New York that lengthened from the original one week into a stay of two months. Always a mystery to the natives, she returned more so than ever this time, with three crated chairs... Louis XVI, she said... in her charge, and two boxes containing some carved Spanish leather for the walls of her little living room down stairs. This became the talk of the town, and always, for some reason or other, brought up a smile. It was another of her cock-a-hoop wild vagaries, said the more staid matrons of Roosevelt. They seemed to imply that Mrs. Delacourt was forever trying to devise ways and means of flaunting before them her originality; she, who was merely carrying out for her own delectation the devices and desires of her own heart, without thought of the impression they produced on bystanders.

On Sunday morning, Daniel gained his first glimpse of his friend. He was singing in the choir now, a

glorious privilege for him, although it meant the extra walk in and out on Saturday evenings, for

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choir-practice, and again on Sunday morning, for the service. But he loved it, with the ritual, the candles, the intoning of the shapely phrases, the blending of the voices with the mellow tones of the organ. It was a whole world apart for him, a universe of peace and quiet and order, above and beyond anything he had ever known in all his life, akin somehow, he could not have said in what way, to that book of ancient statues so ruthlessly shattered for him by his father's hand. The family hardly existed for him now, although he lived bodily in their midst, sleeping in their beds, eating their food, and giving most of his money to his mother at Saturday supper. He moved much in his own thoughts, talking but rarely except with Mr. Carr. At high school he was known as a silent student, not much given to associating with the other boys and girls, and seeming to consider as almost negligible quantities his teachers. Mr. Brough, the little superintendent, had much to say in private about the sad tendency of young Durnan to hold himself aloof, and on several occasions held him up anonymously as an evil example of the absence of proper school spirit. Daniel did not seem to cherish properly the school-yell. And always on Saturday afternoons, he was working on some house or other, instead of attending the football games or the basket-ball games, or the baseball matches where his team was contending. It was lamentable, the narrow life he led, the few

pleasures he had, pondered more than one head in considering his case.

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By the boys he was considered a “nut”; by the girls a “stick”; while some of his teachers felt that some of his opinions were “dangerous.” On the whole, especially since he had no money behind him, he was hardly to be counted.

At church, Daniel did not much concern himself with matters religious, and he felt grateful that he was allowed to come and go without being pestered with such things. His attitude was altered from the old definite assurance within him that there was no God, but he was not yet sure, on the other hand, of what were his definite beliefs. The whole thing seemed in abeyance within him, a comfortable state, wherein he talked long with Mr. Carr and could even employ his terms of God and Heaven, the soul and Jesus, without a sense of hypocrisy. So too the church service worked upon his sensibilities. Had he been confronted with the necessity of a decision at this moment, yea or nay, absolutely, he would in all likelihood have flung himself away impatiently, following the dictates of his rationality. Instead, he came and went without question, gladly donned the vestments of the choir each week, seeming to put on therewith an impersonal self which pleased him. Mr. Carr had given him a certain understanding of what he termed the Will of the Universe and how that our happiness lies in consonance with that Will, in the yielding of ourselves, as it were, to the guidance of that unseen higher power.

In putting on the cassock and the surplice, Daniel figured to himself,

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each Sunday, the submergence of his personal self in this churchly thing, this spiritual garb, which, he felt, could actually, in some unknown manner, work him weal. For all the world he could not have told this faith of his to any living soul; he only half acknowledged it to himself.

As he marched up the aisle of the little church that Sunday morning, suddenly his eyes fell on the back of a woman's head, and he recognized in an instant who it was. Beside her stood Mr. Delacourt, silently holding with her the book, from which, however, neither of them was singing. The boy's cheeks went scarlet, and he dropped his eyes quickly to the page before him. When the double line parted, to allow the end of the procession to go first into the chancel, Daniel stood directly opposite to Mrs. Delacourt, but did not look up. Her face lighted with pleasure to see him, and she glanced with a smile, at her husband, to call his attention to the boy. Mr. Delacourt raised his eyebrows, and Daniel resumed his march eastwards. Nor did he once, during the service, dare to look where sat the person whom he most cherished on this earth.

As the recessional was in progress, however, the boy did raise his eyes to her in passing, and the flush of warm color in his face at the moment brought the color racing into her cheeks as well. First at the one and then at the other he glanced, and one could almost

see sparkling in his eyes the anticipation of meeting them again, after the service. Mr. Delacourt

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twinkled his eyelashes at the boy, and gave him an imperceptible little nod of the head. Daniel was grateful for the greeting from the man, whom he had never felt that he knew very well. He felt himself inwardly lifted up indeed. What lay before him he did not know. But She was come back, the most wonderful person he had ever known, albeit sometimes rather terrifying.

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Even as the last chanted benediction was floating out through the closed doors of the sacristy, Daniel was surreptitiously unbuttoning his cassock under cover of his white cotta, and he was the first to hang up his vestments and take down his coat and his cap. Then a moment of embarrassment came over him, and from being in a terrific rush he was suddenly loath to leave the room and go outside.

As he waited undecided near the old square piano, used for rehearsals, he glanced toward the door. And there stood Mr. Delacourt in the shadow, looking at him keenly. Hurriedly the man beckoned to the boy, and Daniel went over to him, with his heart beating faster. Mr. Delacourt looked quickly over his shoulder and slipped inside the door of the sacristy, breathing a word of apology to one of the young women of the choir as she tried to pass him in the doorway.

“How are you, my boy?” demanded the Frenchman, with his carefully shaped vowels. Then without

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waiting for an answer he glanced around the edge of the door again, drew Daniel further back into the corner, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

“I have a request to make of you,” he said, looking into the boy’s face. There was no anger, no bitterness, in his features, not even the intensified earnestness that one might have expected to accompany the words which followed. “My wife, she will invite you to dinner with us today. You will kindly not accept her invitation. You are a nice boy. Understand?”

“Yes sir,” murmured Daniel, tears springing to his eyes in spite of himself. He blinked them back and looked down at the cap in his hand, as he wished himself at that moment a thousand miles away.

“Now you must go out and say ‘how do you do’ to my wife,” continued the Frenchman, pretending not to see the perturbation of the boy. “This is all nothing, you understand. You are a nice boy.” With his hand still on Daniel’s shoulder, he swung him gently round towards the door.

“Oh no,” remonstrated the boy, breathlessly, “I can’t go out and see her now.”

“Why not? It is nothing, you know. I just do not wish you to come to my house.”

Daniel straightened himself and marched to the door without a word. Mr. Delacourt shrugged his shoulders delicately when the boy passed out ahead of

him, and then paused smilingly to allow two elderly ladies to precede him.

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Daniel was smiling wistfully as he stood beside the automobile, when the older man came out, and Mrs. Delacourt was leaning forward to speak to him.

“I was just asking our young friend to come along and have dinner with us today,” she said to her husband.

“Ah?” he replied, smiling. “And what does he say to that?”

“He’s very wicked, and won’t do it,” she said.

“Well, good-bye,” exclaimed the boy, unable to stay longer, with the eyes of Mr. Delacourt upon him.

The woman held out her hand.

“Shall we see you this afternoon?” she asked, her eyes lingering upon his serious countenance, and her fingers clinging to his hand. Mr. Delacourt started the engine.

“No ma’am,” said Daniel firmly, looking away. “Good-bye.”

“Pauvre gosse!” chuckled the Frenchman to himself, later.

“Tu dis?” she asked, turning sharply.

“Rien!”

“Comme toujours!”

Not another word was spoken by either one all that day.

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In the afternoon Mr. Carr showed up at the Durnan home, and was stared at by some thirty-odd eyes

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as he approached the porch. He was accustomed to this usage, however; was, as a matter of fact, somewhat irritated if this modicum of tribute was not forthcoming upon his approach, felt chagrined. He tended to scorn the lack of curiosity in those who did not recognize the unique monstrosity of his moustaches.

As the man of the family, it was Mr. Durnan's province to speak with the stranger, and so the others in the room all held silence. But likewise, as head of the family and owner of the house and grounds, it was incumbent on him, Mr. Durnan felt, to preserve a silence something insolent until the newcomer had been forced to declare himself. He sat therefore with his chair cocked back, speaking in his very posture his high sense of American independence and equality with all the world.

There was something of formality even about the way in which Mr. Carr deliberately knocked upon the post of the porch, even though the full light of the thirty-odd eyes within the room was upon him. Slowly then Mr. Durnan let down the feet of his chair, slipped his socks into his shoes, and advanced to the edge of the porch. Having discharged his burden of tobacco juice, he wiped his mouth and spoke.

"Howdy," he said.

"Is this where Mr. Durnan lives?" inquired Mr. Carr, seriously, looking up.

“I reckon it is,” replied the other. “I’m him.”

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There was silence in the room behind him, as the whole family took in this colloquy.

“I am a carpenter, Mr. Durnan,” continued Mr. Carr, lowering his eyes in modesty, and brushing aside one moustache, tenderly. “Your son has told me about the extraordinary colt you own, and I have come out this afternoon to look upon it. Is he at home... your son Daniel, I mean? And is the colt here?”

“The animal’s here, all right, but I don’t rightly know about the boy,” replied the other. Then he turned towards the room. “Ella, is Dan round about anyplace?”

“I ain’t saw him, Jo,” said Mrs. Durnan, rising, and coming to the door with Millie, the new youngest on her hip. “Ray, you or Tom run out and call to him out the back door, there’s a good boy. Go on, now. You hear me?”

“That boy ain’t never round the house. He reads too much,” complained Mr. Durnan, leaning comfortably against the post of the porch. Mr. Carr received the comment with a cold eye. “How’s he about his work, now?” added the father.

“I find him in all respects a remarkably able lad,” said Mr. Carr. It is lamentable to chronicle the fact that this commendation did not raise the estimate in which Daniel was held in the family, but only served to lower their opinion of the strange visitor.

“You think he’s good with his hammer and saw, do you?”

“I find him in all respects admirable.”

Clearly, however, from the tone of voice, Mr. Carr’s good opinion did not extend to the whole family.

“May I go to see the animal now?” he asked politely.

“Sure you can. I’ll take you down.”

“Oh, don’t trouble,” said Mr. Carr hurriedly, putting out a hand. “Don’t trouble. I can find him quite well alone if you will direct me to him. This way?”

And alone he did go. There was something about the man which in the presence of Mr. Durnan gained his point swiftly and surely. Through his perfect courtesy one yet sensed a thorough disdain of Mr. Durnan and all his ways. After an association with the zodiac and planetary influences, Mr. Durnan was for Mr. Carr, be it confessed, but small beer.

“Ah, there he is!” exclaimed that gentleman to himself, as he strode away into the south wind towards the lower pasture. May was in the air, and the whole earth seemed in jocund mood, with sky and hills and birds and beasts in consonant jubilation.

“I shall enjoy this indeed,” he added to himself as he solemnly opened the gate and passed across the railroad track, having glanced carefully in both directions to make sure the way was safe. Then he opened the further gate, let himself pass through, and with equal seriousness made fast the gate once more. This way and that his whiskers danced in the

wind as he turned from time to time in his ministrations with the portals, but he was patient with them, and his brow remained serene. So may Solomon have walked, with the youngest and gayest of his concubines.

The scene that ensued was not to Mr. Carr's liking, and in after years he sought as best he could to blot out its memory from his past. With respectful deference had he approached the mythical creature before him, burdened with the sense of the rare privilege it was, thus to come into contact with one for whom one of the constellations of the zodiac had been named. He even meant to bring in a graceful reference to the creature's standing between Capricornus and Scorpio. The almanac assigned the thighs to the particular keeping of Sagittarius, the centaur; Mr. Carr thought that perhaps he would say something about the knees of the gods. At any rate, in ancient times these divine creatures, half-man, half-horse, had been mighty teachers, Mr. Carr knew, and he came willing to learn, inspired by the hints of the creature's ancient remembrances that Daniel had yesterday recounted to him.

But he found the animal teasing a young mare in the lower pasture, so that she squealed from time to time and let fly a slender hoof at him every now and again, whereupon the centaur would laugh and return to the sport with renewed vigor. When he suddenly spied the man standing looking at him however, he flung a rock at her, and pretended with an

oath to be trying to drive her away. In sooth, the young filly had been enjoying the sport, too, despite her laid-back ears and her shrill remonstrances, and now would not so easily be put off. So that the centaur had the embarrassment of seeing her linger near him now, inviting further play, when he would rather have put off his horse-nature and be as nearly wholly human as possible. He swore some more, and scowled at her, with another rock thrown for earnest of his meaning.

“Howdy!” he called to Mr. Carr. “I can’t get these damn animals to go where they’re supposed to go.” And then, to show that he was utterly human, he plunged forthwith into a brilliant display of all the scurrilous and generally obscene terms which he had been able to accumulate, including an essentially untruthful statement concerning his own animal birth and parentage. On the whole, he managed to employ practically fifty percent of filth in that first gorgeous demonstration. A Regular Army sergeant could hardly have done better, although he would not have stooped to some of the cheap effects of mere repetition in which the centaur indulged.

Mr. Carr’s face flushed red, and in the breeze, his two moustachios seemed to start back in dismay, fleeing from the evil torrent like blown flames.

“Is this your habitual method of speech, my good friend? Or is it only momentarily adopted to overawe me?” he asked calmly. “There is no less impressive manner of making manifest one’s essential

masculinity, I may say, than this. Mere forcefulness of mouth can, and often does, mask the most craven of hearts, believe me.”

The centaur’s jaw fell, at this flow of language, equally torrential with his own, but patently of a higher order.

“Shucks!” was, however, his sole reply, and he spat.

“I come to talk to you of other things,” continued Mr. Carr evenly, “if you will.”

And forthwith he would have plunged into a discussion of ancient manners and morals, with the Greek conception of philosophy and their understanding of geometry and the stars. The sole reply of any worth he gained from the obstinate animal was a brief laugh at his pronunciation of the word “hypotenuse,” and a hurried correction in classical Greek.

“Hell, if you want to talk that sort of old stuff, you better go up and see the old guy up on the hill,” suggested the centaur finally. “He’ll talk your arm off, he will. Got me up there the other day and wanted to know what kind o’ shoes them guys used to wear.” There was infinite disgust in the tone of the creature. “I give him a earful on that. I told him plain, as my time was too valuable to go around gabbin’ on that there sort of stuff.”

Mr. Carr was baffled.

“Do you realize, sir,” he said at last, “that you are the first atavistic representative of your race

in at least twenty-five centuries? Naturally some of us are interested in you, and appreciate the rare opportunity it is to speak with you.”

“Aw, talk English,” commented the creature, “and cut out the sob stuff. I ain’t the least bit concerned with what you’re interested in. Give me my belly full, and a quart o’ hooch now and then, and...” His eye wandered off to the horses in the upper end of the pasture, and he smiled. “Some of youse guys up there at the University seems to think there ain’t nothin’ to be done all day long but just stand around and gas. There’s other things I’m interested in, believe me.”

There was silence between them for a moment, and then Mr. Carr seemed to sense the hopelessness of the conference. With never another word to the animal, he turned to go back to town.

“Rotten wood!” was his sole commentary, and then his eye lit on Daniel coming towards him down the slope.

The boy was depressed beyond measure, and even his very real enjoyment at seeing Mr. Carr could not bring a smile on his features. He had been wandering alone, after a meal where he had eaten but little, and now his thoughts were chiefly centred on the rebuff he had that morning received. The more he thought on it, the more monstrous did the thing appear to him.

Mr. Carr expressed to him briefly his disappointment

at finding the centaur so sodden a creature. As they walked up the field together, the wind was behind

them, and the man's whiskers streamed out before them, until he gathered them in to his bosom with a gesture not unlike that of Michelangelo's Moses.

"He reminds me," he added finally, tucking the two appendages into the opening of his coat, and loosing his chin gently, "of a bit of our own fertile ground roundabouts here in the Ozarks. It is capable of putting forth the fairest of flowers and fruits and shrubs. And yet, look at what all of the people between here and Roosevelt have made of it... including (you must pardon me) your own family. Their front yards are an abomination in the sight of the Lord, hideous, barren, stark, and utterly devoid of all beauty and wonder. Generally they are graced with the wreck of an ancient Ford. When one thinks what they would have been in their original state of nature, sometimes one doubts his fellow-creatures. Ah me, these people have a long row to hoe before they learn to be human beings."

He sighed and they reached the gate in silence.

"The truth of the matter is, my boy," he said, summing up the subject, as they stood on the railroad track, which he was to follow to the Mill, instead of going up past the house, where he might be forced to stop and talk. "The truth of the matter is, that your centaur down there is trying to descend to what

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most men are. Yours it must be, Daniel, to try to rise into what humanity has sometimes shown that it can be. Good-bye."

And with that he turned and stalked away, under the starboard breeze.

Thursday afternoon, Daniel was working after school-hours on a house below the Square, where the land falls away quickly to the south, with a wide spread of panorama of the tumbled Ozarks, showing a noble valley riven between, which the railway follows on its way down to Forth Smith and Texas. As the boy worked, he fell to wondering why none of these houses ever gave any notice to the glorious view spread out behind them, but invariably turned their backs in this direction, choosing rather to face the street, where they could look only on gadding people and the peregrinations of automobiles and carts.

“God will punish them for it,” said Mr. Carr when the boy mentioned the fact to him.

“Don’t you think it’s a punishment already not to be able to see such things, even when they’re before you?” asked Daniel, laughing. He was still serious, for the most part, however, thinking of that hideous episode at the church on Sunday. It haunted him and would not leave his mind.

“Very well put,” replied Mr. Carr, straightening himself for a moment, and looking solemnly at the boy.

Then an automobile stopped in front of the house, and two ladies got out of it. One of them was the woman who was building the structure, a pest about the place, as far as the carpenters were concerned,

always changing her mind about details, and scenting shortcomings and attempted chicane on their part.

“Here comes the snooper,” groaned one of the men.

Daniel looked. The second woman was Mrs. Delacourt. Panic whirled through his brain, and again that old inclination to flee was upon him. But he stuck to his post, and did not again raise his eyes.

Chatting together, the two women entered the uncompleted house, laughing as they mounted the swaying plank that served as causeway.

“Now this is to be my entrance hall, with an archway here at the right,” explained the leader immediately, in a tone that proclaimed the anticipated joy of a lengthy exposition.

“Ah yes,” came the low tone of Mrs. Delacourt’s voice. And Daniel knew without looking, that the words were spoken at him, and that her eyes were upon him at the moment. Something within him seemed to be tingling under the vibrations of the words. He could hardly see the work that he was doing, but he kept doggedly on.

“And here is to be... Oh dear! You’ve gone and got this all wrong again. This isn’t the way I wanted this at all. And I distinctly told you... Now look here!” She was off again on one of the

furies that the men had come to know so well. With guest forgotten, she stormed and scolded and ordered about. Suddenly Daniel and Mrs. Delacourt were alone together in the skeleton of the entrance hall.

“Daniel,” she said softly, “I want you to come and see me this evening. After supper. Will you?”

For the first time the boy raised his eyes to hers, and there was a look of pleading in them. He felt that he had never seen anything so beautiful in all his life as the woman who was standing there before him, so rich and lovely, representing all the things that he was starved for in this world. She smiled gently to him, and her dark eyes seemed to widen and glow with the affection that was in him. Now for the first time, he realized, too, that he evidently had been growing in stature during the winter, for he was looking down into her eyes, across the littered uneven space between them. He could never know, however, how much changed he was in other ways as well, in rounded symmetry of feature, in the smooth arching of his eyebrows and the mobile strength of his mouth, and a new strange richness in the sweep of his hair. The woman standing there almost went dizzy with what she saw.

“Will you?” she asked again, and there was a sweet little turn of the head as she spoke, as though in humility she were asking a boon. She smiled and looked up at him, and her hands spread themselves apart a little, imploringly.

“Oh, I can’t!” sobbed the boy. With all his heart and body and soul he wished to talk with this woman standing there before him. But there was a youthful fineness about him that held him faithful to the word he had given to her husband. He looked deep into her

eyes, and his lips quivered as he said the words. He hoped that she would understand, although he could not bring himself to say why he could not do what she asked him to do.

She drew in her breath briefly and bit her under lip for a moment, and then fumbled somewhere for a diminutive handkerchief.

“Then I’m coming down to see you,” she said, almost under her breath.

And as she tucked away the bit of linen, the whirlwind was upon them once again, still indignant over misapprehensions and the maladroitness of Roosevelt laborers, still resounding through the hollow shell of the frame structure like a fury.

“You must excuse me for running away this way,” she paused to say to Mrs. Delacourt, and a moment later she had led her guest into further parts of the house, and up the improvised steps to inspect the upstairs arrangements and see how cleverly she had tucked the bathroom into a spare corner.

The men downstairs were meanwhile laughing among themselves over the ways of women, and how they must be made to pay through the nose for their last-moment vagaries in the matter of building.

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Daniel could hear and half distinguish their words in the next room, just as he could hear and half distinguish the rich low tones of the woman’s voice upstairs.

Then his heart stopped beating, it seemed to him, and his blood was halted in his veins. For he heard

what two of the men were saying close beside him, through the thin wall of laths.

“You know who the other old girl was, don’t you?”

“The dark one?”

“She’s the artist west of town. Kind o’ gay. You ought to see some o’ the things she’s painted! God!”

“What do you mean?”

“Mean? Why, she’s the one they were talking about at the meeting the other night.”

“The hell she is!”

“Sure!”

“I’ll have to pike her when she comes down.”

There was a moment’s pause, and now Daniel could feel his heart beating like an engine, and his blood throbbing through his whole system.

“She’s running after some young kid, too.”

“Yeh, I remember now.”

“Well, she’s the one, all right!”

“God, I’ll have to pike her when she comes down.”

Then the feet of the two women could be heard starting down the stairs, and there were customary warnings about slipping, and the proffer of a supporting hand. The men fell into silent labor. Daniel

could not stand it, he fled into the far part of the house, there to remain until the visitors had left the place. When he heard the engine starting in the car, he ventured forth. Looking out he saw Mrs. Delacourt’s eyes fixed upon his. With a little smile, she turned on toward her hostess, and an on-looker would have noticed nothing.

But the boy was terribly perturbed within him. What could he do ? When he heard the men talking he wanted to fight them all, and thus shut their mouths. He felt the utter impotency of his lone situation. Moreover, he could in his imagination hear the jeers and taunts so perilously near the truth, that the men would fling out at him if he said anything, how that evidently he must be her “sweetie” himself. His hands were tied by the very nearness to her that he had rejoiced in. Had he not stood so close to her, and felt so deeply a personal sense of obligation, he might have been free to lift his voice in expression of his disgust at their ribaldry. He looked at Mr. Carr once or twice, in hope that the older man would speak up to silence their talk. But he went on calmly about his work, as usual paying no heed whatever to their words, one would have said. He disdained them thoroughly.

Facetiously the talk started, with male comments calmly superior, appraising, commendatory, smut-laden. It grew, became general, branched out to other cases, flipped names about with easy grace, casually damned matrons and maids with a word.

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Then the moral fibre of the men was stiffened, and the talk fell serious, with effective tales of the cleaning up of towns and the riddance of bad rubbish, over which many a good point was made with tobacco juice. From venders of bawdy tales these men had suddenly become efficient American citizens, cognizant of their duty, protective of the virtue of their homes. The Klan was not too openly praised at first, for one never knew

just where one stood. But divers of those present asserted that although he was not a member, he would say this for the K. K. K., that... then would come the solemn report they could solemnly wag their heads to in affirmation, that the Klan had given fifty dollars to the matron at the depot, and a deserving cause it was, too. One of the men piped up with the account of the school teacher who had lived next door to him, and who was said to be a German. They made quick work out of him, I tell you, gave him twenty-four hours to get out of town. And he got!

“What had he done?” asked Mr. Carr solemnly, looking up through his gold rims.

“Done! Didn’t I just get through tellin’ you he was a German? And he knew it, too. Didn’t take him long to make up his mind when he got the word. No, sir. He got out of town that afternoon. After he got the letter.”

“America for Americans,” suggested Mr. Carr.

“You bet your sweet life!” replied the other, and a fine flush of enthusiasm was on his swarthy cheek.

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“Where were your ancestors a hundred, two hundred years ago?” continued the little man behind his moustaches.

There was a sharp gesture of surprise from all the men.

“What the hell you drivin’ at?” said the original speaker. “You one of them God-damned Catholics, kissin’ the Pope’s toe and acting traitor to God’s own country? Let me tell you, my friend, if you are, God help you, that’s all I got to say.”

The magnanimity of this response brought nods and becks from all the workers, who seemed to realize suddenly that there was arduous moral work to be achieved in this country, if it was to be made safe for honest citizens.

“I’m a hundred per cent American, that’s what I am, and I’ll take it out on any damned foreigner or anybody else that says I’m not,” he added.

“A hundred per cent?” repeated Mr. Carr, musingly. “That doesn’t leave very much room for Christianity, does it! But there, we won’t quarrel about that.”

“By God, I won’t let any man sneer at the flag in my presence!” burst forth one of the men, who had been mostly silent.

Disharmony was in the air for the rest of the afternoon, and the work done in the next few hours was in after years regretted by the dwellers in that house, I fear. The men grumbled and swore among themselves. Mr. Carr alone went on his even way,

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undisturbed by the electrical energy storing in their rancorous brains.

Daniel still was burdened with his problem, as to what he should do about that impending visit she had said that she would pay him that evening. It was unthinkable! Should he go up on the hill and forestall her coming down? No, that he would not do, having given his word to the contrary. Should he run away from the house, and not be present when she came? That would be exposing her to the crass brutality of his father, whom he could hardly trust to act better in the

present contingency than he had done concerning the book of antique sculpture. The boy's throat hurt him with the anxiety and woe that seemed to be burdening him beyond endurance. He wanted life to be all clear and sharp-cut, with firm outlines and clean distinctions... and here it was, muggy and sloppy, with no firm ground beneath his feet, anywhere. He craved peace and quiet and cleanliness... and he got only muddle and misunderstanding and cross purposes such as the present.

No, he would meet her and try to keep her out of the way of the house and its inmates. And then? Oh, he was sick of life.

Evidently his feelings were apparent in his features, for as they were laying off work that evening, Mr. Carr looked at the boy and then spoke.

"You must be master, my boy," he said, raising one cryptic finger in admonition. "You must give

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way neither to things, nor to feelings. Remember that. Things and feelings, put them under. You must be supreme in your own soul."

"I'll try," replied the boy, smiling vaguely, and somehow, perhaps because of the sympathy in the man's words, he seemed to feel better already.

"I shan't be seeing you much longer," continued the old carpenter, removing his spectacles and fitting them into their rubbed case.

"Are you going away?" asked Daniel, truly concerned.

“No. You are. This is no place for you. You will go far. But here... even Christ could do ‘no mighty work’ in his home-town, remember. Good night.”

And with that, the man was off, leaving the boy to make of it what he could.

• • • • •

It was nearly eight that night, with twilight still in the air, when a car drove slowly past the house, topped the little rise beyond, and dropped out of sight. There it stopped. Daniel was waiting out by the barn, where he could see the whole expanse of road in front of the gate and down the hill, so that he might command the situation, wherever she might choose to show herself. Now he made his way down the slope, and at the far corner he crawled through the fence.

“Come round on the other side,” said a low voice,

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and the door was swung open for him. He stepped in, and the car moved on.

For some time neither one of them spoke, while Mrs. Delacourt was concerned with the driving of the car down the uneven length of the dirt road. Once she turned and smiled at the boy, and reaching over patted his hand.

“I want to have a good long quiet talk with you,” she said, bringing her eyes back to the driving. She switched on the lights, and they swung up the cemetery hill, past the yellow house on the right. At the foot of the decline beyond, she slowed down the

car and swung into a little semi-private lane leading off to the left. And still they were silent. Across the railroad track and on up the rocky little road they went, past a couple of houses with their barns and sheds, and then on through a stretch of scrubby oak woods, where they suddenly came on a stone hut tucked away among the trees. Someone inside was playing a piano.

The car exerted itself up the ascent towards a giant oak which stood at the top, beside which was a little stretch of lawn. Behind them, although they did not know it, the piano ceased playing, and an evil surmisal followed the vehicle up the grade, a surmisal based upon previous experiences of big cars that followed that path and then came down again after a while.

“Isn’t this a pretty place to sit and talk and watch the last light in the west, and not be disturbed by passers-by?” she asked finally, when the whirring

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heart of the car had been stilled and they sat in the midst of a sudden wide silence. “Let’s get out and sit there... and talk!”

Without speaking, the boy let himself out of the car, and went round to help her to descend. She clasped his warm fingers closely, and did not loose them when they stood side by side on the ground. She stood as though waiting.

“You haven’t kissed me,” she said, “and this is the first time you’ve seen me alone for ever so long.”

Daniel did not want to kiss her. Since that encounter with Mr. Delacourt he had not wanted even to see her, as a matter of fact, although he could not have told her

so. There was something now that seemed to bind him more closely to the man than to the woman. Mr. Delacourt had been quite honest and simple and direct with him, had treated him like a man, had placed a trust in him which Daniel did not wish to break. He stood hesitating how best he could say this, extricate himself from the demand for a tenderness that he did not feel.

Then the sound of a galloping horse's hoofs coming tearing along the lane below them became evident, and without embarrassment they were able to turn aside without the completion of the endearment for which the woman had asked.

"Bring the robe to sit on," she said, and led the way to the little uncultivated lawn of grass, still however, keeping hold of his hand.

And the galloping horse was none other than the

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centaur, coming in precipitous haste, in pursuit of the two in the motor car.

For when the car had stopped, below the slope down from the Durnan house, he had been standing behind the barn, keeping an eye on Daniel. The night was still warm from the clear sunlight that had poured down all day uninterrupted, and he had taken off the coat and the shirt that nowadays always graced his torso during working hours. He had tried to talk with the boy when he had come out from supper, but Daniel had somewhat shortly sent him on his way and said that he wanted to be alone. The animal had retreated, but his stubborn insistence, like that of a devoted dog,

had kept him lingering near, to see what the meaning of it all could be. Then the car had come and had stopped, and the boy had run down and clambered into it. Hastily snatching up his garments, the centaur had hesitated for a moment and then dashed down the slope at full tilt. High over the fence he had soared, in one of those leaps which ordinarily he did not indulge in while there was still so much light in the sky, and down the road he had raced, with a steady swinging gait that carried him thudding along at a great rate. He was glad when he saw the lights suddenly flash out on the car ahead of him. When he topped the crest of the cemetery hill, he descried the wavering patch of their illumination traveling off to the left, and then he was sure that he would catch up with his quarry, for

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egress from that little lane there was none, except by turning round and coming back the same way. Over the tracks, up the rocky lane, past the two houses and the scrubby woods, and past the stone hut he dashed, galloping ever. He was young, and he had been training himself, and he looked upon this fling of his wild dash with interest, to see how his endurance was holding out.

Then suddenly he came upon the darkened car, and he flung down his hoofs to break his speed, and there he stood, sweating and breathing hard, in the very presence of the woman and the youth whom he had been so madly chasing. For a moment he stared at them incredulously, and then he grew self-conscious,

and laughed a bit sheepishly. Under his arm was the tightly wadded bundle of his shirt and his coat.

“Oh dear!” laughed Mrs. Delacourt, when the spectre stopped short in its career and suddenly loomed large in the twilight before them. “Isn’t this your...”

“Yes. What do you want, Dick?”

The animal was still breathing audibly with his recent exertion, and before essaying an answer he picked at the rough bark of the big oak.

“Oh nothing,” he replied, and then he turned and grinned childishly for a second at Mrs. Delacourt.

She was not totally displeased at this interruption of the interview which she had been at such pains to achieve. In the first place, in that brief

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moment when she and Daniel had stood there under the tree just before they had heard the sound of the approaching hoofs, she had suddenly sensed the gulf that lay between her and the youth beside her, and once more a fleeting feeling of the uselessness of the whole thing had swept over her. The boy did not feel what she felt. Their meeting again did not mean to him what it had meant to her. There was something lacking in the boy, she had hurriedly told herself, albeit she had, even in thinking the thought, hurriedly put it away from her, and refused to believe it utterly.

Then there was a warm sense of healthy direct naturalness about the animal, which pleased her. She released the boy’s hand and sat down on the extended

rug, leaning back on her two hands with her shoulders slightly hunched.

“My, but he’s grown!” she said admiringly. The pronoun showed that she was speaking to Daniel, but the remark was aimed directly at the animal. Taking out her cigarette case, she helped herself, and then snapped shut the lid.

“Gee, lady,” said the centaur, allusively.

“Oh, I beg your pardon,” she said, and she opened the case once more, and extended a cigarette for his fingers.

“Would you mind letting me have one for tomorrow, too?” he said, confidently, looking into her eyes.

“Have you a pocket?” she asked, nodding towards

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his coat, still under his arm. “I’d be glad to give them all to you!”

He looked down at the crumbled garments, and then suddenly realizing for the first time his nakedness, he grew confused and shy.

“Yes’m,” he replied, laughing, and hardly daring to look at her. “Excuse me for a minute, will you?” And like a youngster caught in swimming, he dashed behind the big tree and there struggled into his shirt and his coat. When he came out once more he showed his white teeth in a broad smile.

“Now,” he said, reaching for the promised cigarettes.

“You’re much nicer without those things on,” she said quietly, “and someday I’m going to paint your

picture, shall I?"

"Yes ma'am," replied the centaur blandly, although he did not know what she was talking about. He stored away the treasures, and accepted a lighted match from her fingers. She shuddered involuntarily, and drew out her handkerchief.

"Where do you live, lady?" asked the animal, as he puffed on his cigarette, and leaned with one hand on the tree.

"Over on the hill over there, above your house. Daniel must bring you up sometime, to pose for me. Will you, Daniel?"

Daniel was still standing, rather blankly looking on at all this, or else watching the slow vanishing of color in the west. He had hardly spoken a word

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since they came out. Deep down within him he was realizing, for the first time, it seemed to him, that this close of a day was in more senses than one the close of a day for him. Mr. Carr's enigmatic words were in his mind. Almost like a vision, as he stood there, he reviewed all the horror of the winter in the house of his father, in one quick flash, and it seemed to him that he could not too soon, now, get away from it all. Last summer, too, was a discontent to him. He had then been groping, feeling his way towards he knew not what, holding on to Mr. Carr and to Mrs. Delacourt, both of whom had been so good to him, and good for him, too, he felt. But now he wanted to be off. He felt that he could hardly stand it to sleep another night in his father's house. He wanted... he wanted... like the

centaur last fall, he did not know what he did want! Yes, he did, though. He wanted time to be silent, and to be alone, and to think things out. He wanted to be free from the intimate contact with his father and the family; he wanted to be free from Mrs. Delacourt... suddenly he realized that on Sunday it was that he had gained his first big shove in this whole new direction; he wanted, even, to be free from Mr. Carr, kind and encouraging as he had been. Suddenly he knew in his heart of hearts that in his heart of hearts there was no single human being on earth at that moment whom he really wanted to see or to be with. Then he heard his name called, and, for some reason he could not explain, his eyes filled with tears.

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“Daniel, boy, come and sit down beside me,” she said. “I want you to talk with me. No, sit here on the robe. Remember, there are chiggers!” She laughed softly.

The boy seated himself as she suggested, but there was a sullenness about his acquiescence that boded no great intimacy. The presence of the centaur irritated him, and he felt that he could not talk with that great creature listening nearby. Even as the boy seated himself, the animal let himself down on the grass near the oak, leaning his human body against the mossy bole of the tree.

“Dick, I wish you’d go home, now,” Daniel said.

“I ain’t a-goin’ for you,” replied the centaur sulkily.

“Would you go for me?” asked Mrs. Delacourt, sympathizing with the boy’s delicacy.

“Aw, gee, lady. Let me stay. I like just to hear the sound of your voice.”

The woman laughed gently, and thought for a moment.

“All right. If you’ll promise to lie down and go sound asleep so that we can talk. Will you?”

“Yes ma’am,” replied the centaur. He wriggled his way out from the tree by a series of grotesque convulsions, and then pillowed his head on one arm and lay quiet.

The two fell to talking, at first on indifferent subjects, about the winter just past, and the fates of the two books that she had sent him. Then, as the animal’s breathing grew deeper and more regular

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at their feet, she drew the boy’s talk into the deeper things that he was thinking and feeling. She brought forth the account of the episode at the church on the previous Sunday.

“And so now he means more to you than I do,” she suggested quietly. And the boy did not answer. There was discussion of the ways and means of the boy’s leaving home. She was all sympathy with him there. His carpentry would carry him wherever he wished to go, so far as the mere livelihood was concerned. She found herself suggesting details of traveling, with a suitcase, and shirts, socks, and a mending-kit. Once again, before she realized it, she was mothering the boy, lured on by the helplessness that was his, and the real interest she felt for him. When finally they rose to leave, her sense of humor was sufficient to send her

laughing suddenly at herself, and at the repeated predicament in which she had so often been left when long with the boy.

Her skirt seemed caught on some twig or other at her feet. But when she stooped to loose it, she found that in the darkness the fingers of the centaur had reached forward to the hem of her garment, and he was sleeping peacefully, sustained by this contact with the uttermost periphery of her being. She said nothing to Daniel, and they climbed into the car without waking the animal. Not until the churr of the catching gears did he open his eyes, and it was not until they were at the bottom

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of the hill that he could realize what he was doing sleeping out there under the big oak.

He lay still for a while remembering the sound of Mrs. Delacourt's voice and the soft music of her laugh. That was rich contentment for him. Taking out one of the cigarettes that she had given him, he considered it, was conscious of a fragrance about it that ordinary cigarettes did not have for him. He had no matches, but he hardly wanted one. It would be a sacrilege, almost, to smoke the precious thing.

As he walked slowly home that night, along the railroad track, he had one of his rare spells of wishing that he were a man, "really a man," as he expressed it to himself. He felt it in him to be a great man, a leader, a commander, one looked up to by men and worshipped by women. Only his... only this thing prevented him, he told himself, casting a look back

over his shoulder. He was philosophic about it under the starlight, walking along with unlighted cigarette between his lips, and with hands clasped behind his back. By George, he was going to lead a better life henceforth. He was going to cut out all that swearing. He was going to quit running about in the night time, visiting far pastures surreptitiously, a practice into which he had recently fallen and which he hardly dared envisage even to himself in the light of day. He would go over to the little church by the Fair grounds, and see if he could make out what it was that there so engrossed the people's attention. He had heard

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them talk of religion as being the duty of all men. Into the church itself he could not penetrate, of course, but he could stand on the outside and listen. That would be better than nothing. This resolve brought him to the gate at length, and chastened he entered into it. The voice of a woman had once more worked havoc in this world, albeit a havoc of weal and not of woe.

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VI

BESIDES the regular Sunday evening services in the little church opposite the Fair grounds, there were frequent revival meetings during the week, led either by Mr. Holcomb or by a preacher from a chapel in town. Enthusiasm waxed high at these services, with ecstatic singing of the hymns, and ejaculatory expressions in the course of the talks. Nor were the congregations composed most largely of elderly spinsters, old widows, and decrepit men, as is so frequently the case in other places of worship. It was surprising to see present the large number of young mill-workers and girls from the canning factories, many of whom came from quite the opposite side of Roosevelt on foot, and looked forward to the return-journey by the same means of propulsion. The reason for this interest lay largely in the fact that other forms of amusement cost more. Home was a place to flee from. Clubs there were none. The movies demanded money. Street-corners were not bad, of course, but church was better, for there one was sure of finding one's friends of both sexes alike. Then, afterwards, there was the long walk home, fraught with possibilities.

To one of these meetings, the next night, the centaur followed the rest of the family, accordingly, coming along in their rear half-haltingly, without attracting attention to his presence. At the church, he did not

attempt to enter, but lingered outside the circle, near Mr. Holcomb's wood-pile, where Mr. Dewitt last September had first tripped to his downfall. Pensively the animal leaned on the piled-up wood, and watched afar the young people round the corner of the deserted old store. Bright-eyed girls with preternaturally vivid cheeks were laughing loudly in front of the church over the sallies of their male companions. The boys ranged from fourteen up to the early twenties, and were many of them in overalls. The others wore store clothes of tawdry pattern and cut, and caps were struck into jaunty positions on the sides of their heads. Cigarettes, despite the tenets of the faith, were much in evidence.

Finally, at some word from inside the door, the troop grew quiet and then entered the little frame structure, and silence fell over the vicinity. The centaur waited a moment before going over quietly towards one of the windows, through which the lamp-light was falling from within. The windows on this side were all closed, to keep out the strong breeze blowing up from the south. They were ordinary sashes, filled with clear white glass, but at some distant date they had been painted white on the inside, to keep out the insolent gaze of alien

eyes. Here and there a pane had also been darkened by the application of some opaque diapered design which mimicked stained glass in squares of sallow reds and yellows, bought by the foot from a mail-order house, and pasted on. Everywhere, however, the nervous hand

of youthful worshipers had been busy, and scratched on the painted panes were initials, names, hearts, houses, faces, dates, and even an occasional filthy word. Through these designs it was possible to gain a furtive glimpse of the interior of the house of worship if one were tall enough. To one of them the centaur now easily applied his eye, so much higher he stood than mere mortal man.

The votaries had burst into song by this time, one of their own hymns, written by their own pastor, in which they were well versed.

I came to Jesus long ago all laden down with sin,
I sought Him long for pardoning grace, He would not
take me in.

At last I found the reason why as light came more and
more;

I had a shelf with idols on, just in behind the door.

Chorus

The shelf behind the door... don't use it any more;
But quickly clean that corner out from ceiling to the floor:
For Jesus wants His temple clean, He cannot bless you.
more,
Unless you take those idols out from in behind the door.

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I tore it down and threw it out and then the blessing came; But e'er I got
the victory and felt the holy flame, Beelzebub came rushing up and said
with awful roar, "You cannot live without a shelf right here behind the
door."

Not only did they sing some of these hymns over and over, in their churchly services, but also there was a peripatetic singing-master in their group, who went about from house to house, on Sunday and week-day evenings, and gave them extra opportunities to perfect themselves in these bits of music. Ubiquitously he was looked upon with great favor, so starved were these country-people for something with which to fill their time aside from the labor in the field.

So many people of today are destitute of power;
'Tis plain to see they cannot stand temptation's trying
hour.

By way of an apology "my weakness" is their cry;
'Tis all because of idols they are using on the sly.

Some smoke and chew tobacco, and some love their fancy
dress;

Others have wronged their fellowmen, refusing to confess.
They wonder why they are not blessed as in the days of
yore;

The reason why is on the shelf just in behind the door.

With a solemn and eager face the centaur scanned
the congregation through his peep-hole, craning to

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see into every corner of the structure. Up in front was the rostrum, with its square box-like pulpit, very badly in need of fresh paint. Here stood Mr. Holcomb, singing fiercely and keeping a strict time with a dominating fist like a trip-hammer. At the invalid harmonium close by, whose bellows were highly

asthmatic and whose vocal cords were sadly afflicted, sat the pale Mrs. Holcomb, with attention divided between the music before her and the rhythmic domination of her husband. The music suffered in consequence. Over their heads, on the front wall of the building, in a curve like a rainbow, were painted some words, which, of course, the centaur could not read. They said: "The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom," a text from which Mr. Holcomb loved to extract doctrines truly appalling.

That little shelf behind the door will cause you much
distress;
Especially about the time you think of being blessed.
While pleading for the victory before the Lord in prayer,
How many times you think about the idols hidden there.

Your soul is dark you surely know you have no peace with
God;
You daily tremble lest you feel the chastening of His rod.
The blessed Holy Spirit puts its question o'er and o'er,
What are you going to do about this shelf behind the door?

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"What chiefly engaged the attention of the centaur, however, were the people in the rows of yellow straight-backed pews. First he located the Durnans, over to the right. On them his eyes did not long dwell, and least of all on little Carry, whom he had long ago left far behind him in his rapid strides of development, mental, moral, and physical. Lucy, aged eleven, had for a little while seemed wonderful to him during the

winter. Then May, aged thirteen, had gradually taken on a distinct interest for him. Sally, aged fifteen, was still capable of sending him into a reverie, when he wished he might talk with her and walk through the pasture with her sitting on his back. But Jim, aged seventeen, had now become the most interesting of all the girls in the Durnan family. He could not have explained how it was that thus successively the charms of the Durnan girls had been revealed to him, but nevertheless it was true that only slowly their attractions had been opened out before his eyes. Universally, it may be said, they scorned him, as having seen him grow up from his colthood. Rarely had he had more than a word from any one of them, flung to him negligently in passing.

You need not go to foreign lands to find a household god,
To look upon idolatry you need not go a rod,
But in this land where gospel light is shining all around,
If you should look behind the door an idol could be found.

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Some hypocrites may look like saints, from men their idols
hide;
But what about the judgment day beyond death's fearful
tide?
That hidden spot behind the door will be a public place
Where God and men and angels, too, shall every idol trace.

Towards the middle in one of the back rows, was a girl who suddenly much more interested him than anyone of the Durnans. She was a dark thing, with

bobbed hair elaborately piled up in curls, and around this ornate coiffure was bound a red ribbon, with a bow fetchingly displayed on one side. She could be heard singing ardently at the present moment, but would stop every once in a while to giggle some remark to the swain in attendance next to her, a young chap 'with an unruly pompadour of hair clipped high above his ears. Next to him stood the fat daughter of the storekeeper, Mabel Holland, and by the knowing glances that forever were weaving the girls into one, we might suspect that the other girl "was her intimate friend, Gertie Miller. Which was the truth.

Gertie fascinated the centaur as soon as his eyes had found her, and then the rest of the eighty occupants of the church hardly existed for him. The blond youth beside her was a thorn in his flesh, and the creature felt a hot rage surge up in him at contemplation of the man, against whom he felt a bitter

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animosity. "Thinks he's smart!" he muttered to himself disdainfully in the semi-obscurity outside. He spat, and then peered once more through the dim aperture.

One hymn finished, another was immediately plunged into.

Do you see the signal, brother,
Of the gospel train,
Warning you to be ready,
And your ticket to obtain?
Should you let it pass your station,
You will then be found too late;
You will plead and cry for mercy,
When you see your awful fate.

It's the only train that's running,
On the standard schedule time;
And it's going straight to heaven
On the Royal Gospel Line.
It will make complete connection,
Nothing will this train delay;
Passengers all travel safely
On the straight and narrow way.

During one brief interlude the blond chap evidently pinched Gertie, to judge by her start and ensuing giggle. Then she pushed the boy with an elbow, and a petty struggle ensued, involving the fat girl, who, in her turn, propelled her formidable weight against Gertie's companion, and thus comparative

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peace was established, and they all roared out the words of the song of devotion with immense good-humor. These services were lots of fun.

When you board this train for heaven
And a seat is given you
Take your guide and read it closely;
Its directions you must know;
For it will point out all the switches,
All the side-tracks it will show;
Gospel coaches travel only
On this train that takes you through.

While upon this heavenly railroad
As each moment passes by,
Let your faith and hope grow stronger,
As your journey's end draws nigh.
You will reach the heavenly depot,
It is now almost in sight,
Where the ransomed host is waiting
There to greet you with delight.

Forthwith, at the end of this hymn, the Reverend Mr. Holcomb began the steady deluge of his prayer, with never a word of warning, letting its stern hard syllables float out from the last echoes of the singing, so that there was a brief rustling interruption as the congregation seated themselves and decorously bowed their heads on the backs of the pews in front of them. The centaur did not at first know what to make of this sudden eclipsing of the people's

faces, and thought they were all looking for a mouse on the floor. But the minister, on the contrary, had his

head turned up to the ceiling, although his eyes were closed, so that evidently he was not looking for anything at all. Glancing hastily back towards Gertie, the centaur made out her head, showing a decisive part down one side, and rippling away in curls to the zone of red ribbon. She was whispering with the boy beside her, their occiputs forming a V-shaped angle turning slightly towards one another.

When finally the centaur had so far exhausted the interest of what he was gazing at in the room that he fell to listening to the preacher's words, he found that someone named God was being spoken to, in the room above, evidently, to whom Mr. Holcomb was recounting His various attributes.

"Thou art a God of vengeance, oh Lord, a God of Wrath beyond the measure of man's thinking. We know, oh God, that Thou hast made a place of burning fire and brimstone for them that are wicked. Send down into our hearts the goodness that will raise us up, we beseech Thee, and make us fearful forever more of the dangers of hell's fire. (Amen!) Thou art fearful, Thou art terrible, Thou art just, and no man fleeth from Thy face, oh God. Thy hand is heavy upon them that are sunk in sin. (Hallelujah!) Send down Thy wrath, oh God, upon them that practice the abominable teachings of evolution. Smite the infidel institution upon the hill yonder, oh

God, and send down Thy flames upon its godless professors. (Yes, Lord!) Grant us to know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that books

are a delusion and a snare! Keep us ever mindful, we beseech Thee, that the end of the world cometh when no man knows. Maybe the end of the world will come this very night, oh God, with lightings and thunders, with fires and floods, with cyclones and twisters. Make us ready, oh Lord, to stand safe with Thee in that awful day, safe in the shelter of Thy bosom, while the wicked perish miserably, with blood running down their garments, and their tongues cleaving to the roofs of their mouths. Give us a sign, we pray Thee, oh God, that we are Thy children.”

With startling promptitude, there came a rumble of thunder just then, and a sudden hush fell over the crowd inside the church.

“We thank Thee, oh Lord, for that sign. (Amen! Praised be Jesus!) We thank Thee for Thy loving kindness to all Thy children, the children of one Father, here gathered together. (I got faith, oh God!) And now, Lord, if there are any here who feel it in their hearts that they want special prayers, let them come forward into the pen, while the voice of God is still in their ears, and we’ll pray for them.”

Then, as he continued his violent exhortations, here and there throughout the congregation might be seen rising men and women, old and young, with drawn faces, making their way up to the left front

corner, where were the special pews for those feeling themselves in need of prayer, and designated by the none too elegant term of “the pen.” Here they resumed their bowed-forward position, but now they were

expected to sob and groan, to shout their amens and their hallelujahs, and finally, to wax utterly ecstatic, waving their arms aloft, to become unconscious, and to throw themselves down on the floor, twitching and convulsive, filled with the spiritual grace which afterwards left them "as weak as a rag."

Gertie was one of those who rose from her seat, and with her eyes and the sideward nod of her head she was trying to induce the fat girl to join her. In the first place the lightning had been too much for her... she always did fear such phenomena. Then too, she had once before "got religion," and had very much enjoyed the sensation. For weeks she could feel the tingling in her legs. Her description of the reaction had now almost induced Mabel to join her in the forward push, but somehow she lacked the courage.

The centaur took a new interest in affairs when he saw Gertie rise and come forward on his side of the church. Gee, she was a "looker!" She seated herself demurely in the pen directly beneath his window, and closed her eyes, prepared for the full luxury of emotion that was sure to come upon her. Only a slight motion of her jaws as she slowly revolved her gum, showed that she was still sentient.

Then she remembered that perhaps in her unconscious rhapsody she might choke on this morsel, and she hastily deposited it in one corner of her handkerchief, still with closed eyes, and composed herself for complete concentration.

“Let Thy Spirit descend, oh Lord, upon these Thy children. (Amen!) Make pure their hearts within them and spare them the agony of hell’s fire this night. Let them not sink down into pits of flames and lakes of burning tar, oh God. (Wash me white!) Wrap their hearts in white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb, oh God. Dip them in the blood of Jesus, and make them whiter than snow. (I’m coining through!) ”

Gertie trembled and whimpered slightly. The centaur’s eyes were fixed upon her. He could not make out what was troubling her in this way so sorely, and a wrinkle of anxiety was upon his forehead. His eyes wore the troubled look, that those of a devoted dog take on, say, during a mock scuffle or the acting out of a play in which his master is concerned.

“Lift them up into Thy arms, oh Lord, and make them clean and forever Thine. Shake out the dust of iniquity from their hearts. Put down Thy heel upon their sins. Rinse their mouths of the filthy words of the world, we pray Thee, with the bitter soap of remorse. (Sweet Jesus, smile on me!)”

Gertie leaned back with her head thrown up, so that the centaur, through his darkened window, was gazing directly down upon her inverted features,

with their closed eyes, and lips slightly parted. The rich color on her cheeks seemed the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. Her arched eyebrows seemed to him perfection. Her lips were trembling slightly, and for the first time in his life the centaur felt a new strange desire, unaccountable, inexplicable; he wanted

to put his lips on hers! He leaned forward on the outer sill of the window, with eyes wide, his temples throbbing. His full red mouth already shaped itself to that first embrace, for which his whole body seemed to be bending forward. Gertie was a slight little thing, almost lost in the depths of the cheap red sweater she wore, into whose side-pockets she had plunged her hands. Her body was almost boyish in its slim undeveloped hiplessness and breastlessness, and this, together with the sweater and the short-cut hair, might have borne out the impression completely had it not been for the vivid coloring, none too delicately laid on her cheeks, the chalky whiteness of her nose, and the wreath of bright ribbon about her head. The centaur, peering downwards, could just see her knees. Her feet were tucked under the bench.

Mrs. Kellogg had been one of the first sinners to rise and take her place in the pen, and by this time she was trembling in an agitated manner, across from the window, while short ejaculatory exclamations came jerking from her lips.

Still praying, the minister came over, and with closed eyes, he formed a sheltering tent with his

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hands over the head of the struggling woman, while his face was still turned upwards.

Then a disturbing sound was heard in the room, and the services suffered an interruption. Many thought at first that it was just someone collapsing on the floor, as frequently happened in a particular access of religious fury. But a craning of necks showed a sight far

different, an interloper from without. The form of the centaur was leaning in at the window directly over the pen. The first sound had been caused by his violent struggle to raise the sash from without. And now he was striving to get his arms about the slender form of Gertie, and to drag her into the darkness through the open window.

Truly it was a superhuman effort the centaur put forth, and he strained every muscle to achieve his end. The sight of Gertie's growing discomfort so close beneath him had been too much for him. Almost without realizing what he intended to do, he had pushed up the lower frame of the sash, and sent the window banging against its upper limit. Gertie's eyes hardly had time to open into consciousness before she felt the colder draught of air above her, and then two masterful arms slid themselves under her arm-pits, and she felt the first tug upwards. Instinctively she screamed, and men and women jumped up in their seats and then hesitated what to do. The Reverend Mr. Holcomb tried to scramble quickly to the aid of the girl, but the knees of his devotees in the encumbering pews hindered his progress.

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"Run outside! Quick!" he yelled towards the back of the church. Men and boys grabbed their hats and ran.

By this time the struggling Gertie had been dragged up bodily on the window sill, and the strong arms of the centaur were encircling her waist. Then he swung her legs about, as you or I would handle a small child,

and grasping her knees with one hand, he supported her body with the other, and prepared to be off. The burden was no slight one, but that coordinated body of his, man and horse in one, swung to the bearing of it with a vehemence bred of amorous devotion, and as the men and boys dashed out into the night, they saw the form of the animal, still bearing the girl's body, moving down through the dark, towards the red store and the highway.

At the corner he turned, going towards home at a good rate of speed, trotting somewhat heavily, his rhythm patently impeded by the extra weight. A number of the men started off on foot in pursuit of the creature. Mabel, the fat girl, stood on the step of the church and wailed aloud into the night air her sorrow for her friend. Two men galloped away on horseback. Mr. Holcomb himself started up his Ford engine, and after a somewhat jerky and precipitate series of backings and forwardings, made away in the chase. The Durnans, one and all, from father to the youngest child, were ashamed and bewildered over this action of their animal. The feminine members of the family were all in tears, and the

males scrambled along with the other men in the wretched pursuit of the culprit.

It was quite dark by this time, without even the light of the stars, which, in the darkness of the country spaces, far from the town lights, give more illumination than the ordinary city dweller suspects. But tonight they were clouded. The eyes of the men

running after the animal were blinded by the recent lamps of the church, and so they stumbled along the road not seeing at all where they went. The blinding glare from an automobile swept down on them once, and they waved their arms to the driver to stop, so that they might interrogate him. Instead, he opened his muffler, and with a raucous long honk of his horn, went dashing through them, thinking of some sort of mass hold-up or of a Klan flogging party. Then darkness was more complete than ever, until the lights of Mr. Holcomb's Ford shot about the bend behind them and bore down in their midst.

At the Durnan place, men with lanterns poked about in the barn and looked spasmodically in all corners of the upper pasture.

"Let's see if there's tracks going down through the lower gate," suggested a man. And when none were discovered, the quest there was put off until morning.

Meanwhile, aside from the fact that arduous hunters were seeking here and there intently, there was no system employed for the tracking of the animal. No one seemed to have any idea for an organized

beating of the country round about. The majority of them stood with hands in pockets, talking in low tones first with one and then with another, saying over and over the few things that were to be said, recalling past fears that just such an incident would occur, citing instances, proposing punishments, declaring roundly that the thing ought to have been shot in the first place.

Then a man with wider visions gained the adherence of Mr. Holcomb to his plan, and in that gentleman's touring car five of them started off to arouse the farmers living along the road as far west as Farmingville. Most of the houses they came to were already dark, except for the night light which almost every family in the region insists in keeping in the bedroom. There were hurried knockings, and intense colloquies in the night air. Then the car would drive on, and after a while a lantern would be seen starting out from the house for a round of exploration about the barn and sheds and corners of the pasture. Sometimes these lanterns started walking down the road, with no manifest intention except a general unshaped desire to help.

Suddenly a shot was heard down near the Durnan place. This served to quicken paces in its general direction, drew men from their hunting in other places, and gathered together a group, all of them hoping to look on the end of their quest. But it proved to have been only a gun accidentally discharged. Then there was laughter, and subsidiary

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interests sprang up. The men found it pleasanter to be together than to be wandering about alone. Their efficiency was lowered by the less ground thus covered. It was a hopeless job anyway, most of them confessed to each other, this trying to find a stray runaway animal in the middle of the night, 'with the whole countryside open to his feet.

"What time is it?"

“Quarter past ten.”

“Gee, my work’s goin’ to drag tomorrow.”

Then cars began to arrive from town. Someone had telephoned the news in there, and the citizens of Roosevelt, more metropolitan than their country neighbors, more accustomed to late hours than the denizens of the fields, spread the news among themselves. For many it was a lark, a spree, with groups of cars laden with students from the University, whose laughter rang out sometimes too loud, as their automobiles were parked near the Durnan house, where they waited for developments. More cars arrived, bringing men and women from bridge tables, and then someone connected with the sheriff’s office arrived, and created a sensation, giving a marked impression of efficiency and control. Now the mystery would be solved, it was felt.

As the night grew chillier, with the marked influence of the altitude of this mountain country, there came sometimes a distinct aroma of alcoholic stimuli from the dark interiors of cars or trailing after the passage of some group of seekers. Here and there

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on the hills and through the woods could be seen the flickering progress of a lantern. At this distance the pathetically small radius of its quest was apparent, that diminutive needle-point of light wandering about in the vast haystack of the wooded hillside.

Down near the Mill there was another centre of interest, where the home of the abducted girl shone out into the night with an unaccustomed burst of

lamplight, spread abroad through the open door and the unshaded windows. There were cars in front of the place, and newcomers were constantly halting there, while complete strangers walked in and joined the groups who stood about listening to the interminable details of the affair or heard the groaning of the mother and the sobs of her sisters.

Finally, about twelve, the last terrible addition was made to the nightmare commotion of the dark, when suddenly the fire-siren in the town sprang into life, and began ceaselessly to rave over the roofs of the town, throwing its giant snake-like form into the heavens, gyrating and twisting like a serpent in agony, rousing the countryside for twenty miles round. Not only for one or two vast spirals of the gamut did it rise and fall in its shrieking, as was its wont whenever a fire broke out in the town, but endlessly, it seemed, as though the thing were in mortal pain and could not be stilled. Citizens sprang from their beds, thinking that surely some dire calamity was upon them all, which threatened destruction to the whole town. At the telephone exchange, dozens,

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scores, and at last hundreds, of calls were simultaneously put in, hopelessly congesting the affair. When no reply was gained, an added air of panic swept through the terrified populace. With that mad tumult of the siren flashing back and forth, overhead in the air, thought was impossible, calm consideration was out of the question. Men dressed hurriedly to go out and find out what the trouble was. Their wives clung to them

weeping hysterically. And in sooth the men suddenly feared to leave their houses unprotected, not knowing what the hellish hubbub of the fire signal could mean. The whole town was up and dressed, ready to flee if necessary, though from what it could be, and in what direction, they did not know. Neighbors shivering behind folded arms on their front porches, discussed the possibilities, and scanned the heavens for light of the conflagration that surely must be raging somewhere.

Then, gradually, no one knew just how, the news of what it really was, or at least a crude approximation to it, began to spread among the townspeople, street by street, from house to house, and many, now too much aroused to think of sleep, especially with the shrieking siren over head, formed little neighborhood parties either to sit up and see what they could get on the radio, or else to get out the car of one or the other and go out to see what could be seen there near the Fair ground. Garbled versions of the tale flew about, with wild details of wholesale rapine, and quaint fancies and popular conceptions of free

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love in the Holy Roller religion. The name of the Reverend Mr. Holcomb himself was not left spotless, or else it was his son who was the perpetrator. Those who did light on the truth, naming the centaur, had generally to explain who and what the creature was, so little had the fact of his existence sunk into the consciousness of the town.

The name of the Klan was whispered among the other details, as well, and then more than one face went serious, and grim determination of moral rectitude spread about the mouth of the hearer. With a look at his wife, the man would leave the group and go off up stairs to the bottom drawer of the dresser, whence would be extricated the white robe and pointed white head gear. Generally there was a hurried attempt to verify by telephone the call to arms, but the service was disorganized, and either one got no reply at all, or else the wrong number was gained and rectification was hopeless. Most of them went down and opened the garage doors, with the white bundle under their arms, wondering what lay before them. Over head, ceaselessly, the siren howled and raved in the cold dark sky, gone mad, and driving the whole town to the same condition. Its sound was not improved by the fact that now the keeper of the thing had wearied of his job, and was allowing divers friends and acquaintances to try their hands at the manipulation of the scale. Thus it was that the town was regaled with a series of experiments to determine who could most slowly make

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the gigantic howl move up and down through the complete range. Sliding stridently up the register with frightful, slow intensity, it would poise at the top for a moment and then begin to descend with equal languor, slipping almost imperceptibly down, but agonizing ever. In the hospital not far away, two women died about one, after an hour of this sort of thing.

Out in the country, meanwhile, the chase had simmered down to a lessened group of those who were intensely in earnest. Hoof marks, indubitably those of the centaur, had been found, leading off to the right from the Durnan place, towards the hill where Daniel had sat one Sunday afternoon, and surveyed his home from afar. Up towards the Delacourt house, as some of the men remarked significantly, the tracks were pointed, and when the party finally set off in that direction, there were some white-robed figures in their midst, with shrouded heads, gazing with difficulty through two slots for eyes. Inasmuch as the night was still so dark as to make difficult all seeing whatever, these hooded creatures were martyrs indeed to their moral vision, and their progress up through the rough undergrowth of the hillside was not made easier by their added blindness. Nor, one might have thought, was there much necessity as yet for their attempted incognito, since faces were at best invisible except in immediate proximity with a lantern; and moreover, voices and gaits were generally as clearly perceptible through the cumbering

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paraphernalia as though the costumes had not been. Such is the power of make-believe over the human imagination, however, that not one of these men doffed his disguise. Perseveringly they plodded on, suffering.

Somehow, with never a word of the change having spoken, it was not the quest of the centaur and his ravished prey that these men were pursuing now, these numerous hooded men, and their hangers-on and

supporters without costume, but equally stirred with them in their moral intensity. It was not some unknown spot in the woods up on the hills here that they were seeking, but a definite locale, where stood a high frame house perched in the middle of its grounds and sheds, which had nothing to do with the Durnan animal and his delinquencies. It was the Delacourt house towards which all these men, with one accord, were bending their steps. An ominous shudder had seemed to stir the whole dark group of them at first mention of the fact that in the direction of this house the horse's hoofs had pointed. Corroborative nods and grunts of acquiescence there had been, and the silent bearing-out of that verdict of the meeting sometime ago, to which Daniel had heard the carpenters referring. Up the hill they came, in the darkness of early morning hours, hardly a hundred of them all told, straggling, and now not much talking. Hardly a man of them but would have been glad to have been out of this affair; but never a word of faltering was heard. Weary with the untoward

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hour and the steep climb, the cumbering skirts and the ugly prospects of tomorrow's work... for Saturday is a hard day for barbers and grocery store clerks and salespeople in general, not to mention garage workers, delivery boys, and so forth... there was still no giving up. One hint of hesitation spoken would have been followed by relieved feelings of "That's what I say," and "Let's go home," at that moment. If it had not been so dark, so that walking without a lantern was

impossible, several of the men felt that they would have slipped off unperceived, and so home and to bed. But no, they could not walk without a light, and a light would reveal their delinquency; so they climbed on in patient endurance.

At the top of the slope they came out on a road, and off to the right were visible some few scattered lights, representing Roosevelt. It was strange, one might have thought, how many of the white-robed figures turned quietly in that direction, as they topped the rise, instead of bending off to follow the road to the left, leading towards the house. A Klansman stood a little piece down the road and turned back these erring members. "The other way, brother," he said. And inasmuch as he disguised his voice as he spoke, they could not recognize who he was, and so were afraid to claim his friendship and slip off to town past him. "Oh, I got twisted, that's all," they assured him, and scuttled back in the opposite direction.

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Nor did the weather inspirit their hearts. That early premonitory rumble of thunder in the first part of the evening had not borne fruit immediately, but the sky had all the night hung darkly ominous, as though perhaps deep wrath were pendent there. Momentary flares of distant lightning had been visible in the northwest, imperceptibly creeping higher each time. Had the mad serpent of the incessant siren not been writhing and twisting all over the heavens above the hills, there would have been audible increasing rumbles of the thunder creeping up on them.

Then the cold became perceptible. While climbing, especially in regalia, and most especially with that great snuffer enveloping one's head and neck, the men had not been conscious of the cold, had in fact been forced into a heavy perspiration. Now that perspiration sprang into consciousness as a cold wet pack, chill, close-clinging, luring cold air into the intimate depths of one's garments, so that men suddenly grew sensible of their spinal columns and the small of their backs.

"Gee, a fire'd feel good!" spoke one white-robed figure.

"Here! Don't talk too much," said an authoritative voice, from a Klansman just passing by.

"All brothers over this way, all over this way, now," came the command, from a little distance, and the sheep were divided from the goats, who stood

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deserted, marked from the elect by their ordinary clothes.

Cars arriving from the town grew thicker about this time, with new recruits to this later phase of the chase of the centaur. Their beams of light, wigwagging up the east slope of the lull and coming finally into the very heart of the straggling group at the top, sent a needed message of courage into those discouraged souls that had labored up on foot. A cheery sense of jubilation seemed to spread about the place, an exhilaration. The staring lamps of the automobiles, left lighted, seemed to warm as well as illuminate their beings. Now something was really doing, one felt. It was like standing in front of a large and prosperous

theatre, blazing with electricity just before the performance begins. There were laughs. The world was agog.

Discretion was flung to the winds, and restraint was out of the question. Openly the name of Mrs. Delacourt was spoken. She was going to get what was coming to her. They should worry. Her husband was allied to none of the groups in town, hardly known to them. He was neither a Mason nor an Elk, a Rotarian nor a Lion, not even a member of the Chamber of Commerce, God help him, and most assuredly not a member of the Klan. Some augured from all this abstention that he must be a Jew. He went to the Episcopal church when he was in town, to be sure, but even there his allegiance was so noncommittal...

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well, you know who led the prayers in the Klan meetings, and even he didn't stick up for him, did he?

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Down in the valley one pair of eyes were lifted to the strange illumination on the top of the hill, and for a moment the boy could not imagine what it meant.

Daniel had been chagrined at what had taken place that night. He had been down in the lower pasture when the family departed for the meeting at the church; he wanted to be alone, to think over this new decision that was upon him, this determination to leave everything and go away, he did not know where. For a while he wondered if it would not suffice for him

simply to go into town and take a room there by himself, and so be free of the family, free to go on with the work he wanted to do, the personal work that somehow he figured to himself as a road lying before him, where he must advance. There would be work even in marking out the road ahead of him, for he felt no certainty, no clear guidance to the path. But he knew one thing; that he needed time and aloneness to work out his salvation. And so, perhaps, he had better take Mr. Carr's full suggestion, make a clean sweep of it and go away, quite away, by himself. The old sense of devotion to the family, to the youngsters, to his mother especially, was hard to down, that sense which once before had held him

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faithful against the comfort and the peace and the cleanliness which had been spread before him on the hilltop over there. Still, as he looked back over the months, since he had made that sacrifice in their name, it seemed to him that the sacrifice had been in vain. He could see no difference that it had made. The family was no better off, except for the money that he had brought home, and he could just as well have given that although living away from the confusion of the house; the youngsters were no better for his having lived among them, surely; his mother hardly seemed to notice his being there or his not being there, so filled were her hands and her head with the affairs of the family.

It was dark now, but still he lingered on in the congenial quiet of the lower pasture. Off to the west he

could see a bank of dark clouds, shot now and then with white lightning, promising a visitation here before morning, Daniel figured. The whole sky was overcast, but it did not worry him. He sat on a stump, nursing his knee, rich with the content of long time to ponder, even though it was a problem which he was mulling, which demanded solution. Then came that single rumble of thunder, which was heard and interpreted in the Holy Roller church, and after a moment the boy rose and wandered up to the house, where he went in and prepared to light the lamp, in order to read. He had just taken off the chimney when he heard a gallop of hoofs in the road outside. Listening, he recognized the beat of

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the centaur's gait, with just the least accent from that lame hind hoof, imperceptible save to an intimate. Then the hurried pace was checked, there was a brief rattling of the chain at the gate, and Daniel heard no more. He thought nothing of it, but proceeded to the kitchen for a match, and returning, lit the lamp. He put a shade on the light, since he was here alone. When any of the family were present, such a luxury was impossible, since they all liked the blinding glare of the flame in their eyes, seemingly, and complained of the gloom if it were lessened.

Daniel fetched "Pickwick Papers" from its hiding place in the room where he and his brothers slept. Then a mounting tumult of sound in the road outside broke in on him, and in a moment he was caught up

into the whirlwind of excitement concerning the centaur and his doings.

The boy kept still about what he had heard shortly before. He felt that he well enough knew the centaur, to know that no real harm would come to the girl at the hands of the animal. He felt pretty sure, likewise, that the two of them were now somewhere down in the lower pasture or off in that general direction, at least, and that he could more surely find them alone than with that rabble about him. Besides, he sensed immediately the hysterical feeling that was in the air, from which, if possible, he would like to shield the creature.

After a while, when the crowd was thinning and

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he could slip off unobserved, Daniel went down to the lower gate and passed over into the pasture beyond the railroad. The fastenings were intact. Down to the lower corner he went, near the little pool where the centaur had once recited Greek poetry for him, and there he halted to listen. Honkings of cars over on the highway were audible, and he could make out, too, the sound of voices in front of the house. Otherwise everything was silent.

Daniel opened his lips and called gently then.

“Dick! Oh, Dick!”

He paused and listened.

Nothing.

Then he tried it again. And still to no effect. And again. And still in vain.

The boy pondered. He tried to enter into the mind of the animal, and figure out in which direction he would most naturally have turned with this strange burden of his. From what he had made out of the confused tales of the people from the church, the centaur had been attracted by the girl, in a way not unlike that in which Daniel had seen that he was affected yesterday in the presence of Mrs. Delacourt. He could understand the whole thing, he thought, the quite romantic feeling with which the centaur had looked through the window at the girl below him, suffering, as he would feel, in need of assistance. The animal's sympathies had been stirred, Daniel had figured out, and he had rushed to her aid in what had seemed to him the most

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effective manner. There was no need to be wildly excited about the treatment of the girl at the hands of the creature. The thought was not pleasant, to be sure, and Daniel too felt at the moment that he would like condignly to punish the animal. But he felt, also, that that mob over on the highway would not be the fitting instrument for the administering of punishment. His first concern now, was to find the girl and her kidnapper; and his second, to shield the centaur from his pursuers.

Then Daniel remembered the big tree with the bit of grass beside it, back among the hills to the southwest, and he wondered if by some odd quirk of the animal's imagination he had retreated to that spot. For there the centaur had seen Daniel and Mrs. Delacourt, in a

posture, which, by the widest stretching of comparisons, might seem to him analogous to his own circumstances. There too, he had only yesterday been happy in his talk with the older woman. It was just possible, Daniel figured, that such an idea had come into the creature's head. The more he thought of it, the more probable it became. So that at last, it mounted into positive certainty in the boy's mind, and he set off in the direction where lay the slope and the tree and the little lawn.

He was doomed to disappointment. When he reached the spot, after the long walk back through the stubble fields and the dark roads, he found no trace of the animal and his burden. The boy sat down a moment to rest, and he was discouraged.

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Then, suddenly, while he sat there, that mad racket of the fire-alarm sprang into being, in Roosevelt, three miles away. At first he thought it meant only a burning structure in the town. But as the din continued, in wild gyrations, with its horror swollen and repeated by the echoes among the mountains out here, the boy suddenly realized that perhaps it was a general signal, to rouse the people about the misdoings of the centaur. Then his hair tingled, and cold chills ran up and down his back. Hurriedly he rose, and started running down the slope towards home, although in the dark he could not long keep up that pace.

As he left the shelter of the lower hills and came out into the wider valley, he could see lone lanterns, here and there, threading the opposite hillside, questing for

the lost animal. He followed the railroad down towards his home, discouraged beyond measure, sick of it all, even a little feverish he thought, with that insane devil-whistle howling up and down in senseless repetition.

When he reached home, he found the place almost deserted. Then it was that he first noticed the lights of the automobiles concentrated up on the hill. He lifted his eyes and for a moment the boy could not imagine what it meant.

His father was just leaving the porch as Daniel came round the corner of the house. There was an unusual alacrity about the movements of the man. He was carrying what looked to Daniel like a sheet,

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and there was a wild excitement about the man's eyes, an exhilaration, one would have said, if the word had been appropriate to one generally so apathetic.

"Where you going? Have they found him?" asked the boy.

"Who?" demanded the man. Then recollecting himself he went on towards the gate. "You mind your own business," he flung back over his shoulder. A Ford was waiting for him, and Daniel could make out that there were five or six men already crowded into the thing. It moved noisily away towards town, and there was a trail of laughter as the red tail lamp lessened down the road.

Daniel glanced hastily into the house, and saw his mother sitting there asleep, bent over the dining-room table where she had been crying. A silent rout of moths and insects whirled about the lamp. The boy stood for

a moment fascinated, and then a distant honking of horns woke him to the situation, and he was conscious of the insistent slow mounting screech of the siren. He turned down to the gate and crossed the road, towards the hill-top where he had thought that he never again would stand.

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By the time the boy had reached the brow of the hill, the plan had been perfected, and word of its general execution was openly passing from mouth to mouth, through the expressionless masks of the initiates. A blazing cross was to be erected in front

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of the house, in the midst of a semi-circle of cars ranged on the lawn to face the structure with all their staring lights. A procession of the garbed brethren was then to pass in front of the house in final condemnation, and then the structure itself was to be burned. Perfect anonymity was to be preserved, of course. But thus the impersonal verdict of the community, against all ungodly thinking and loose morals, was to be rendered, a lesson to men and women alike, who thought to contravene in the vicinity of Roosevelt the customs of common decency and American virtue.

Daniel shuddered and his eyes went wild when he first heard this program from the lips of a bystander, who seemed to relish in advance the spectacle that was to be theirs. A fat white-robed figure went by, and

from its gait Daniel knew it was the Reverend Mr. Holcomb, excited, blood-hungry, elated. And to the triumph of this man and his kind, the victory of this man's civilization and his conception of the world's culture, the city and the country round about had this night organized itself I A flare of angry determination blazed up in the boy, although in its very inception he felt the hopelessness of doing anything to help the woman in the house over beyond those trees.

Then the grand move against the place began. Daniel lost himself in the darkness off to the left, and by a circuitous route he planned to reach the back of the house unperceived.

Every light in the Delacourt house was turned on,

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and every blind and curtain was spread, so that Daniel and the first of the arriving contingent could look into all the rooms of the structure. Even the bulbs on the porches were lit, and the attic windows were illumined. It looked like a preparation for some grand ball or reception, a house-warming; but inside, not a soul was to be seen. Daniel stopped behind one of the sheds, wondering what he ought to do. He was trembling. He wanted to help, he wanted to do something, he wanted to come to the aid of this woman who had been so wonderfully kind to him. Action of some sort was imperative, but what it could be he could not imagine. It was like a nightmare, where one wants to run and cannot. He pictured himself standing on that brightly lighted front porch, defying the horde out in front, destroying them with a wave of the hand,

blighting them with a word. But aside from that impotent picture, he felt himself powerless. He felt a wild desire to run away and forget it all, wake and find that after all it was only a hideous dream. Still, there it was, horribly moving forward to its consummation before his very eyes.

The cars were ranging themselves in the rough semi-circle in front of the house, moving jerkily across the lawn, with their lights every now and then giving an X-ray vision of some Klansman, his trousered legs revealed through the white skirts of his regalia. A galvanized iron cross, six feet high and wrapped in gunny-sacks, which later were to

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have two gallons of coal-oil poured over them, arrived in one of the cars and was dragged forward to a prominent position. A flower bed, recently spaded, although it was not quite in the central axis of the ranged automobiles, was chosen as the easiest place in which to plant the affair, and after a short space of time it reared its symbolic head facing the front porch. Backing and growling the cars came into line and an ever-increasing crowd of on-lookers from town and country gathered themselves behind this bulwark, and milled and whispered and laughed; silently the white robes of the masked perpetrators passed here and there, sometimes tripping their wearers. And still there was no sign of life within that house, illumined now both within and without with the white glare of multitudinous electric lights.

Then to this total terror was summed the added horror of sudden silence, as with one final dying swoop the fire-siren, which now had been howling for more than two hours continuously, fell still. The contrasted quiet was for a moment deafening, as though one were listening to the terrific booming silence of stellar spaces, the silence of eternity, the silence of death and the grave itself. Men turned and looked back at Roosevelt and then stared at one another. But only for a moment. Something ribald came in almost every case to their lips wherewith to break this appalling stillness. Then they felt more at home, once more, and the show could go on.

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Among the unfrocked on-lookers on the outskirts of this performance was one who was torn in spirit. He had just arrived on the scene, coming out in his automobile hurriedly when he had got some inkling of what was afoot in reference to the old Bayham house. Tod Brandenburg, former Rotary president it was, prominent in the annals of local Masonic circles, tall, bald, long-faced, and now especially serious as he looked on the scene, over the upturned collar of his light overcoat, which yet revealed the fact that he at the present moment wore a collar button but no collar.

In his mind he was perturbed. For, on the one hand, he would not willingly have placed himself in opposition to this present band of righteous workers, aligned as they were on the side of public virtue and civic welfare. The Klan was but young in these parts, and still functioned with an almost overwhelming

unanimity of popular approval behind it. To come out openly at the present moment and resist publicly their moral job of cleaning up the town would require courage indeed.

And yet, he had written, for a good many years now, a seven-thousand-dollar insurance policy on this house, against fire. Just where did he stand, then, in this present contingency? Would his company hold him guiltless if he stood idly by and witnessed such a deed as this, with never a hand raised by him to prevent it? Like Daniel on the far side of the house, he wished that he could do something.

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He wished, again like the boy, that he could run away and forget it, and wake to find that it was all a dream. Wouldn't that, after all, be the most discreet thing to do?

Then a figure decked in Klannish guise came over to him, and beckoned him away from the bystanders. The costume of the unknown person was crude, only a sheet and a pillow case, but it did the work of concealment effectively, showing but a high pair of laced hunting boots below.

"This is going to hurt your business," came a low rich voice through the pillow slip. "I'm Lolla Bayham. Don't let on. This is going to send your rates sky high for this town, and you're going to pay for it in your work."

Brandenburg fidgeted, both hands stuffed low into his overcoat pockets.

“I know it. But what can I do?” he answered softly through dry lips.

“It’s going to hurt the town, too. Get your Rotary. Get your Masons. There are a lot of them here. Break up this thing. Let them have a demonstration if they want. But not burn the house. Phil Albright’s with you. I’ve got him started.”

Some of the on-lookers were edging nearer, interested in this hooded mystery in their midst. Mrs. Delacourt said nothing more, but strode away and lost herself in the other enveloping disguises.

Brandenburg stood irresolute a moment, looking on the spectacle with a gloomy eye. Then dispiritedly

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he started walking along the back of the crowd, where they peered between the ranked automobiles. In front of these, in the glare of one of the lamps, he saw Albright, with two or three others. As richest man in the town, he walked with a certain immunity from ordinary usages, and now stood within the sacred precincts of the staring lights, blinding one of the eyes that tried to pierce with virtue into the depths of the abode of immorality. “When his brows were black, as at present, lesser townspeople quailed perceptibly. With him, sharing in his immunity, stood Doc Andrews, editor of the paper, which was an Albright property, and Harris, the real estate man. In the great man’s lips there was a dead cigar, which he was forever turning nervously with his teeth.

Unerringly had the banker drawn to him his aides. Weaker vessels had he not seen, all men who depended

for their jobs on public favor and the votes of the people. Leaders were rare among that rabble. Of preachers and pastors, he knew, there were several present, but all under cover of Klan weeds. Judges, lawyers, and attorneys were all notably absent, as were sheriffs and officers of the law in general. Of teachers and University faculty-members he saw some few, but disdained their help, since for the most part they stood about grinning weakly, lending no hand but also raising no hand in opposition, dependent, they too, on public opinion for their blessed positions. To business interests, alone, then,

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he turned for help in the curbing of this moral fervor.

As Brandenburg stood for a moment behind the car where stood the banker and his supporters, suddenly the cross in the middle of the open space was lighted. A flame at the bottom of the thing hung doubtful for a second, sending out a deal of heavy smoke. Then it seemed to gain courage, and quickly the fire mounted the central staff, and finally crept out along the two arms of the cross. A little cheer went up from the crowd, but waveringly, and the procession of the Klan began to form.

Brandenburg pushed his way through the people standing before him. Now it must be, or never, if he intended to do anything. If Albright and he and the others hoped to stop the ceremony before it reached its final and, for him, most critical stage, they must act.

“See here, Phil, don’t you think this thing’s gone about far enough?” he said hoarsely, touching the

banker's sleeve.

Albright turned and looked at his gloomy white face, and then his eyes slid down to that collarless collar-button.

"It's gone too damned far already," growled the banker. "Ought never to have been in the first place."

"Well, can't we keep 'em from... from burning down the house?" gulped the insurance man.

The banker shifted the dead cigar with his lips

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before he replied. Coolly he looked out over the parading figures.

"I guess they're not going to burn down the house," he said.

"Well, that's what they're counting on doing," replied the other with some warmth.

"No, I've stopped all that. I got word to Thomas. This is all they're going to do."

Thomas was the Christian minister in town. Mr. Albright was a member of his congregation, a sitter at his feet in matters spiritual.

"Sure he can stop it?"

"He'd better," replied the banker laconically.

Brandenburg breathed more easily. Not until the mob was dispersed, and the house had been left intact would he rest altogether at ease; but he did indubitably breathe more easily at this calm assurance from the banker.

But there was that in the expression of the rich man which seemed to bode not well to another pair of eyes that was watching him as he stood chewing on that dry

cigar. As the Christian minister looked through the slits of his hood, when the procession brought him into proximity with the man, he could reap but small comfort from those powerful features. But wherefore, he asked himself, as he marched on solemnly, wrapped in his gown, wherefore should Mr. Albright be offended? Had he not himself privately approved of the introduction of the Klan into the town, and donated a sum to its formation?

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He had had never a word of disapproval for the other cases in which the organization had felt called upon to act, not even when once it had entailed the discipline of some of Mr. Albright's mill-hands. On that occasion he had, in advance, even given his sanction to the demonstration.

Rest quiet, Brother Thomas. Tomorrow you will know why the mighty man bears a black brow. He will distinguish for you then twixt case and case, and show why what is appropriate under circumstances is not to be done at other times. He will show you how it is one thing to have a Klan serving admirably to keep in order the black dwellers in The Acre, and the renters of small houses on side streets, mean citizens of no great import in the building of the town; and quite a different matter to have a Klan destructive of property values and the fair names of those with bank balances and otherwise capable of building up Roosevelt. This present instance was most lamentable, and ought never to have taken place. It must never be repeated. The damage was now no doubt irreparably done. The

woman would indubitably be forced to leave the town, with a name locally besmirched beyond redemption. Thus much, Brother Thomas, will you tomorrow be taught in the subtle distinctions in the valuation of the Klan's service to the community. Further than this Mr. Albright will not instruct you. He might, of course, go on and tell you that he himself plans to buy the Bayham property, at a figure

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below that which would but yesterday have been expected; but this, not being germane to his present lesson, will be omitted.

The cross grew less fiery, its integuments dropping piece-meal to the ground. The marching Klan began to break up and think of home. The cold night-air made itself felt. The hill-top seemed a bleak and desolate place. In the centre stood the house, with all its rooms garishly displayed, still silently speaking out its defiance to the mob.

Someone mentioned the centaur and his prey. Like a jolt that enthusiasm of the earlier evening was brought to mind, forgotten in the more imminent excitement.

"Hell, me for bed! I'm goin' home," said the listener, and turned to get into his car.

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Out from the trees beyond the pasture behind the Delacourt house there came the figure of the centaur, carrying, in the darkness, the sleeping body of the girl.

He was very tired, it was apparent, and she was very heavy, seeming to bear down with more pressure than was absolutely necessary upon his weary arms. Sometimes he looked down at her face and wished that she would waken and shift her posture. Bringing up one knee to support her sagging frame, he readjusted the burden, none too gently, hoping thereby to stir her lethargy. But she was a heavy sleeper even in this uncouth position.

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Now and again there was just the faintest suggestion of a snore from her slender nostrils. Wearily the animal stumbled forward, faithful in his determination to return her safely into the valley. Then, by George, maybe he wouldn't gallop away and forget it all, and never, never get himself into a mix-up like that again!

For the night's experience had not been a happy one for the creature. When first he had gone galloping down the road with that fresh young burden held tightly against him, there had been present in his fancy some such soft idyllic vision as he had pictured in his old dreams of Sade. This beautiful creature was to glory in his strength and to look upon him with lightened eyes, and they were to talk together for long wonderful hours. She would sit on a rock at the base of a tree, and he would throw himself down at her feet, in much the same posture he had taken below Mrs. Delacourt the night before, and then she would laugh with a low sweet laugh at the things he said, and perhaps she would throw a flower at him.

That the visioned happiness had not yet quite begun, of course, was evident from the fact, as he galloped fleeing along the road, that the maiden within his arms was struggling violently, kicking him with both her swinging heels, and striving to beat him with both her little fists, which also sometimes opened their fingers in an effort to scratch him. When he shifted his hold of her so as to include

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a grasp of her wrists, she fell to crying aloud. And when his hand was still further moved, to cover her mouth, she bit a finger, so that he swore abruptly. Handicapped as he was, he could not manoeuvre the gate; and there were voices hurrying after him down the road. Now it was that he bent his path up to the north, and started the arduous ascent up the hill. Oddly enough, in his moment of hesitation, the memory of last night's lovely lady it was, that determined his direction, and he turned towards her house.

In the woods up behind the home of Mrs. Delacourt, he knew he was fairly safe. He was very warm with his climb, and his face was hot and red as he carefully set down his burden upon her feet, with a feeling of great relief.

Instantly she made a dash away from him, but he still had a firm grip on one wrist, and would not let her go. He was mopping at his forehead with his other hand, and for a moment silently endured her struggles to free herself. When he continued to hold her fast, she opened her lips and gave one scream which was meant to be wild, but which still had not much carrying

power, so far have we human beings forgotten the proper use of our vocal cords and our diaphragms. It was really a pathetic little sound out in the open night woods.

“I ain’t goin’ to hurt you, little lady,” said the centaur, gently, as he poked away the handkerchief finally into his side-pocket.

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“Well, then, you let me go, now,” she replied, angrily. “You let me go.”

“No ma’am, I ain’t goin’ to do that, neither. Not just yet, anyhow.”

And once more her feeble little cry was heard.

“I want you to talk with me nice. Won’t you?” he asked.

“No, I hate you!”

With that, their relations were established for the whole period of the night, and if every word of their converse were here set down it would not exceed those two remarks in content and implication. Once, it is true, she whimpered that she was cold, and the centaur stripped himself of his shirt and coat and tried to lay these about her shoulders. At first she angrily tossed them aside, but finally acquiesced in their acceptance. There were hosts of last winter’s dry oak leaves about in hollows, and of these, at the base of a huge old grapevine that swung up snakelike into the top of a tree, he built her a nest, where she could be fairly comfortable.

“And now won’t you talk nice with me?”

“No, I want to go home.”

More tears, and at last a sobbing that died away, and lo, the child was asleep in her warm retreat, with the would-be gallant centaur standing guard over the insensible creature, instead of talking endlessly with her. Even the sudden hurtling shriek of the siren did not waken her. Once or twice the centaur saw lanterns passing at a distance through

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the woods, and he watched them in their progress. Then came the swelling tumult of the Klan demonstration beyond the house, and still she did not waken. Watchful, alert, the centaur kept an open eye near the girl, where he had let himself down to the ground. The lights and the sounds grew stronger and more complicated, and then after a while subsided. At last the night was silent and dark. The centaur scrambled to his feet and shook himself. Then bending, he tried to stir the girl into waking. Finally he got his arms about her body and managed to raise himself. She was very heavy. Her body sagged in his arms. Out from the trees he emerged, on the weary journey down into the valley, carrying the still sleeping maiden.

It was nearly four when he came down finally to the corner by the red store. In one of the houses close by, a lamp was burning. In front of the gate stood a Ford. This must be the place, thought the centaur. Silently he went in at the gate, which stood open, and silently he deposited the form of the girl on the floor of the porch. He withdrew his shirt and his coat from about her body. Then, without a backward glance, or the least

hint of a farewell caress, he turned and made his way soundlessly out through the gate and down the road towards home.

“Never again for mine!” he mused as he went along in the silence. “Nix! Maybe they’ll talk with you and maybe they won’t. And anyway, shucks!”

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Somewhere a horse neighed. The centaur raised his head and listened in that direction silently, pondering.

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There was not much ado next day. The girl was back, unharmed. The centaur stood ready for his regular Saturday’s stint of labor, as though he had not roused the whole countryside for twenty miles round, the night before, through the agency of the howling alarm. Some twelve hundred square miles of hills and lowlands had last night been stirred by his doings, yet here he waited, lethargic and casual, to take up his burden on the pageant over at the University. There were brief words and threats of the whip. But the orgiastic outbreak against the house on the hill seemed to have stilled the rage against the animal, and in the morning’s reaction there was nothing done to him. He seemed dull and plodding. Even Mr. Holcomb was too tired to be vindictive, being much given this day to cavernous yawns, which went unchecked and unscreened from the gaze of the world.

Up on the hill, Mrs. Delacourt moved silently about the house, packing. This night, her husband would

arrive from St. Louis. Not sadly she considered the work before her, selling, getting away from this atmosphere, which never had been congenial, and going north, never more to return. It was all fantastic, ridiculous, disgusting, last night's

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business; but in a way, she was glad that it had come. The problem now was settled. It was a relief, to be thus decided one way or another. The sooner they left now, the better. Silently she laid together the sketches in oils, for packing in a box. Out of place here, they represented for her the new dispensation, the getting back into the life where alone she had been happy. Along with the others went the head of Daniel on its alien torso. As she took it up she considered the thing. Then it was laid in with its companions.

And Daniel? Last night he stood near the house until almost the last automobiles had swung away. Then he saw Mrs. Delacourt in knickers, walking across the disheveled lawn near the flower bed, and with her were several men, talking. Mr. Albright, the richest man in town, was there, and a tall thin man with a cap and a turned-up overcoat, and some others. They went up on the porch, under the light, and then went into the house and sat down. She was not crying, but her motions seemed nervous and strained, and her hair was askew, which bothered her. The boy watched no more, but went off into the darkness. She was safe, at any rate. And he had kept his word to her husband.

Now the boy moved about his planning too. He also felt himself implicitly rejected of the town, and it

seemed to him that not too soon could he get away from it for his peace of mind. In the course of the morning he saw his boss, who was at the

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moment discussing a fireplace which he was sure would “turn round and smoke on us.”

“So you’re goin’ to turn round and leave us, are you?” said the man.

“Yes sir,” replied Daniel, and drew his money without much remonstrance.

He told Mr. Carr that he was going west. Gravely that gentleman nodded.

“Far west, my boy,” he added. “A new race is to spring up in California. I shall not see it. But you will. Have you money?”

“Yes sir. I’m going to work my way out, as a carpenter.”

Once more the carpenter nodded and they shook hands and parted company. The three-fifteen bore the lad westward, over the viaduct, past the Mill, and past his own home, where the little weathered pink structure had never looked so shaky and ramshackle as it looked now from the rear, hurriedly scanned in passing. He was quit of it, he told himself. This was not strictly true, of course, but the gesture was made, and the boy had turned westward away.

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That night, at the red store on the cross-roads corner, the yellow light shone out from the big oil

lamps hanging inside. It was Saturday night, but most of the men were too tired, from that mad jaunt up on the hill in the early hours of the morning, to

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make the pilgrimage into town. And so, here on the dirty porch they congregated, to talk and smoke a while and then go off to an early bed. The talk fell chiefly on last night's escapade, the Klan and the woman, the girl and the Durnan colt. Mr. Holcomb was there, and the older Durnan boys were present. Recitals of facts, with disputes and contradictions, rose and fell on the air, with casual bets that gained no decisions. Politics entered in from time to time, and even religious matters reared their head in the untoward atmosphere; but chiefly the talk was on things strictly local, with a flavor either rigorously moral or else salacious, shifting lightly from one to the other.

There was public disapproval, of course, for the escapade of the animal. Had the colt been beat? was the question. The Durnans rose into silent support of the creature, identifying now their interests with his, who was, as a matter of fact, suddenly grown not unheroic in the eyes of the younger men present. Their ribaldry smacked something of adulation, as though the creature had overnight become one of them, comprehensible now, a mere enigma in their midst before, hardly worth considering. The talk went on endlessly to this refrain.

And then, there, like a ghost come silently into their circle, the centaur was discerned standing on the

outskirts of the group, leaning against one support of the lean-to roof of the porch. All eyes turned in his direction, postures were shifted to face him,

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he was become, suddenly, the focus of the men's interest. In his ancient faded coat, with open denim shirt displayed within, he slouched in approved fashion against the upright, as he had seen Mr. Durnan do, spitting now and again.

He disclaimed, at first, that he had any details of interest to tell about last night's adventure. But then the sweetness of his present condition, standing in the full glare of their admiration, began to act on him, and he warmed to his work. Never, until tonight, had he been so fully admitted into human companionship, never had he so fully gained a right, seemingly, to stand in the councils of men. His it was, then, to see that he did not lose, through too great lack of colorful words, the privileges of this initiation. Thus, hesitantly, he began to talk, in order to keep his place among them. In, he indubitably was, and his it must be to stay there.

Luxuriously he slipped down, still further, with one shoulder propped against the porch, content above his uttermost dreams, one of the fellows at the corner store.

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THE END

About the Author

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Murray Sheehan was an American writer, best known as the author of *Half-Gods*.

He was born on December 15, 1887, in Hamilton, Ohio, United States, to David Este, and Alfarata (Winder) Sheehan. He studied at Sorbonne, Paris in 1908-1909.

Murray Sheehan served in the 6th Division of the United States Army for 18 months, and 12 months in France. Sheehan was a teacher at Miami University, the University of Wisconsin and the University of Arkansas until 1925. From 1930 he was a superintendent at Royal Thai Legation, Washington.

Murray Sheehan is an author of several books *Eden: The Genesis Story Retold*, *Half-Gods*, *The Story of Painting*; *Little Blue Book No. 387* and others. He was a talented teacher and writer. His books received high praise and turn out to be a very entertaining read even today.

